



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

HD WIDENER



Hw K9TM 0

21482.5.3

A

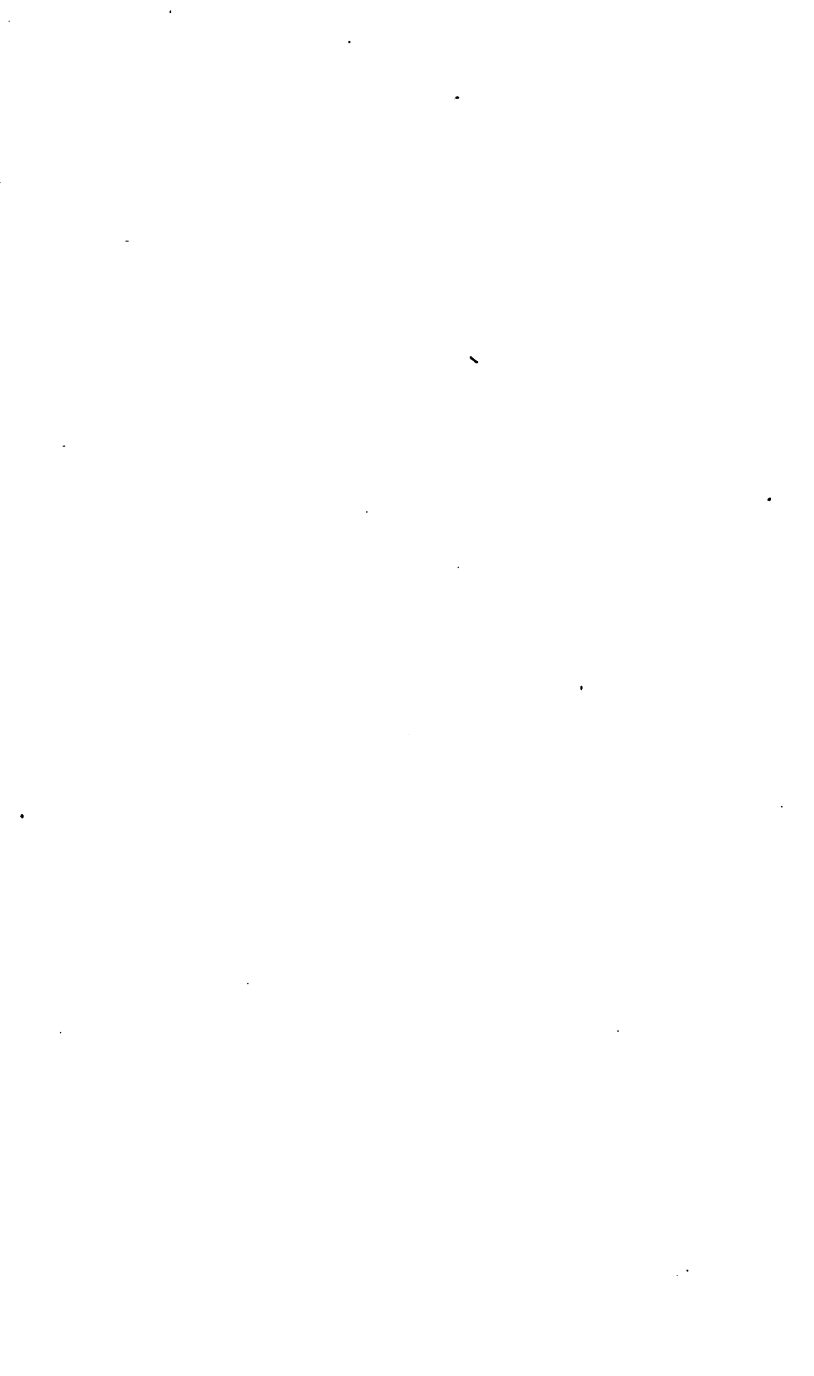
JH  
3-1

PORCELLIAN CLUB

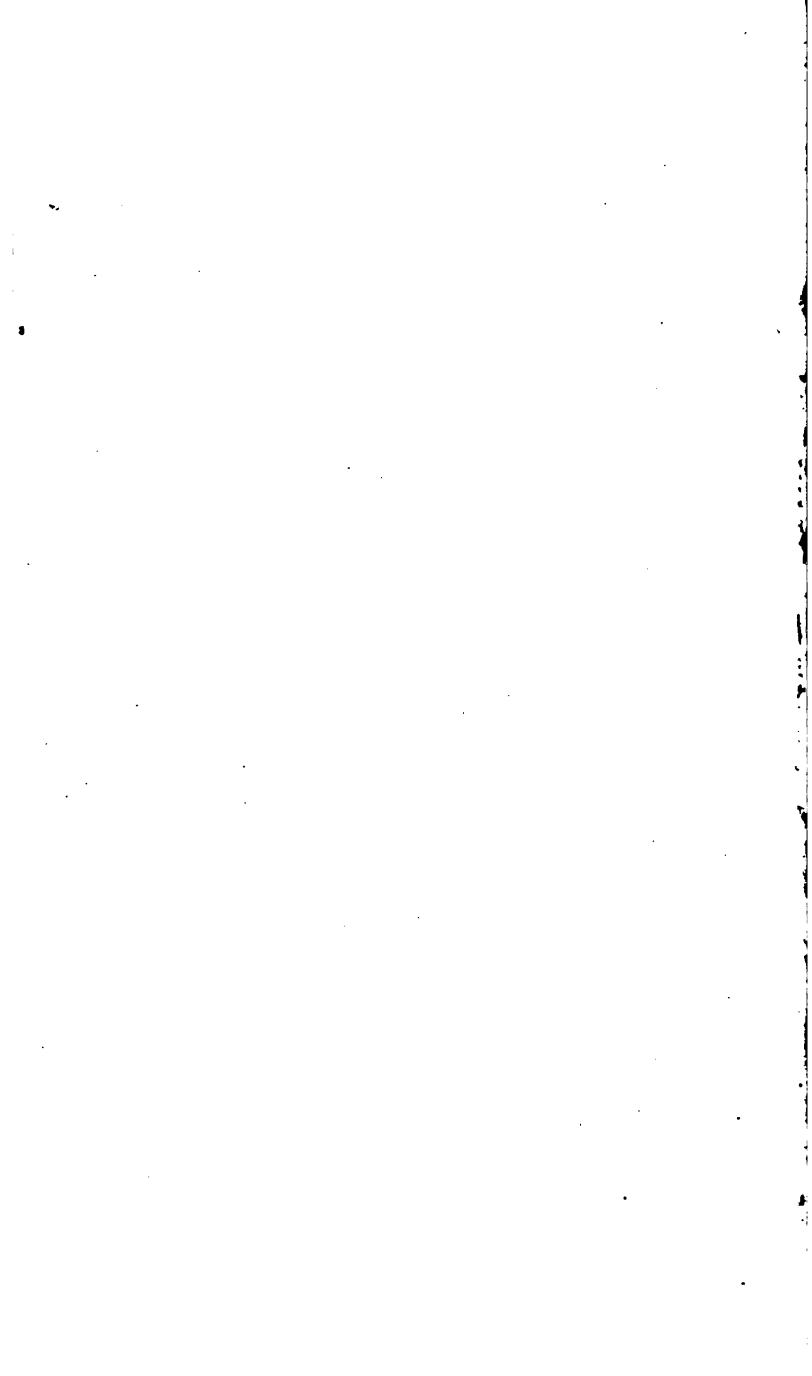


EX LIBRIS

HARVARD COLLEGE



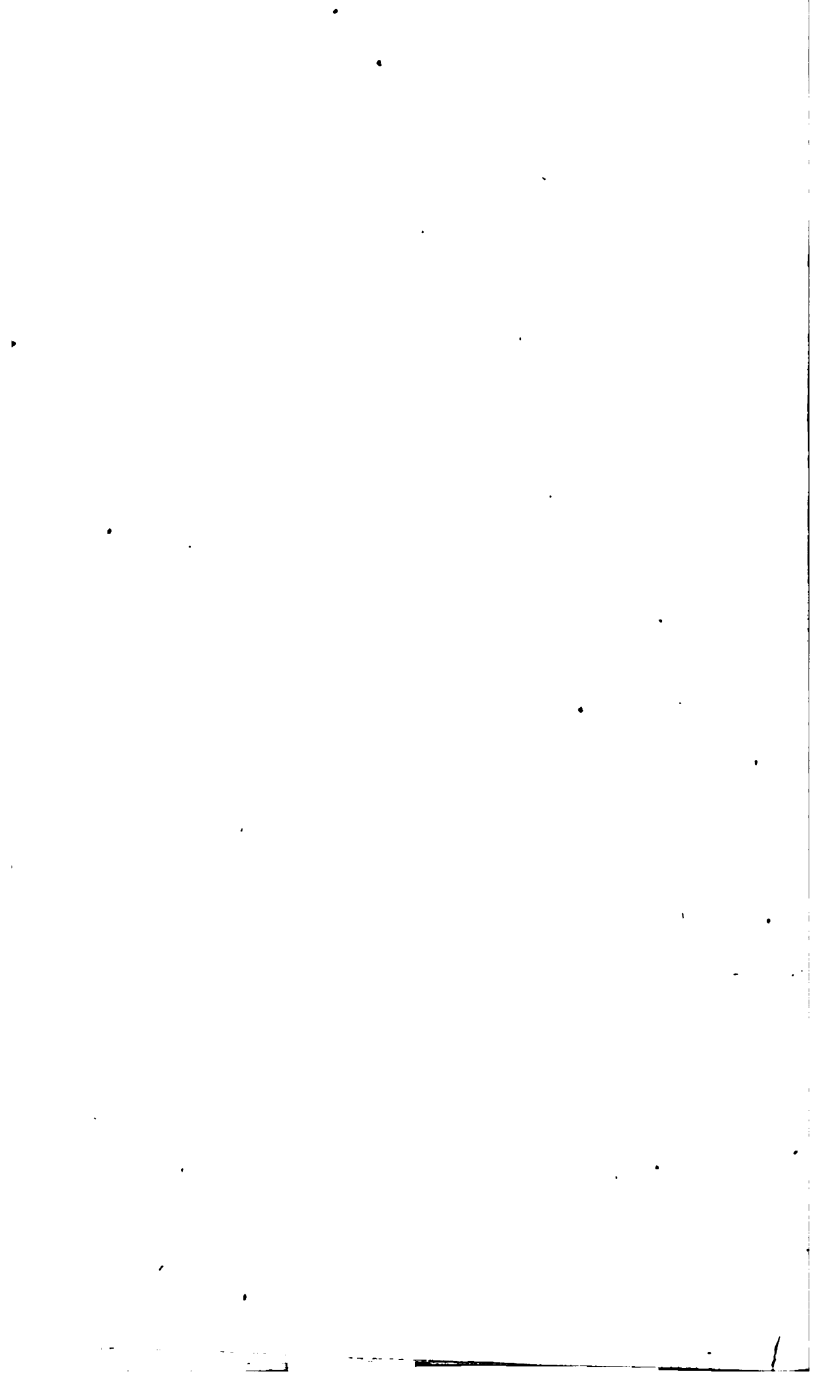


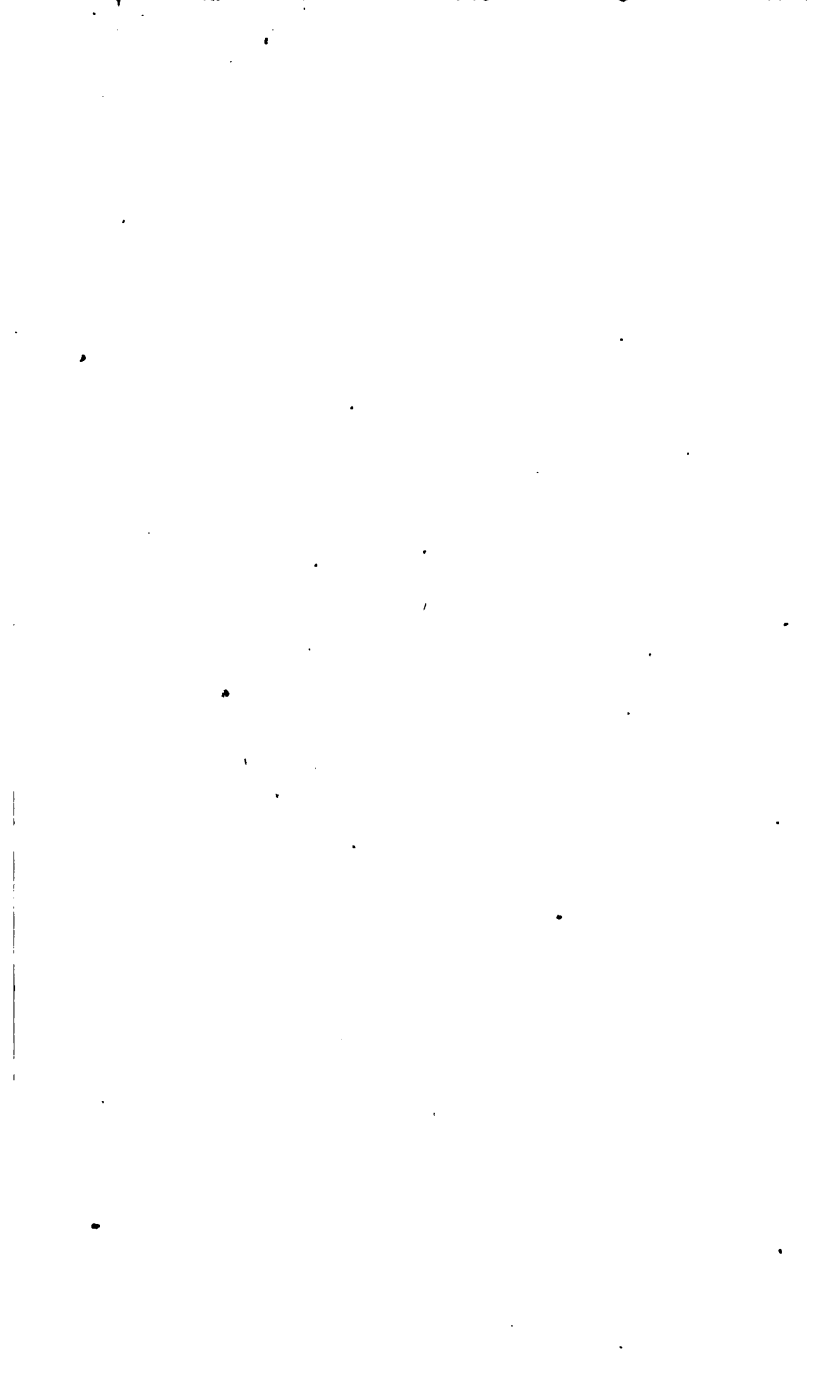


M. Brunner

to the Pic Club

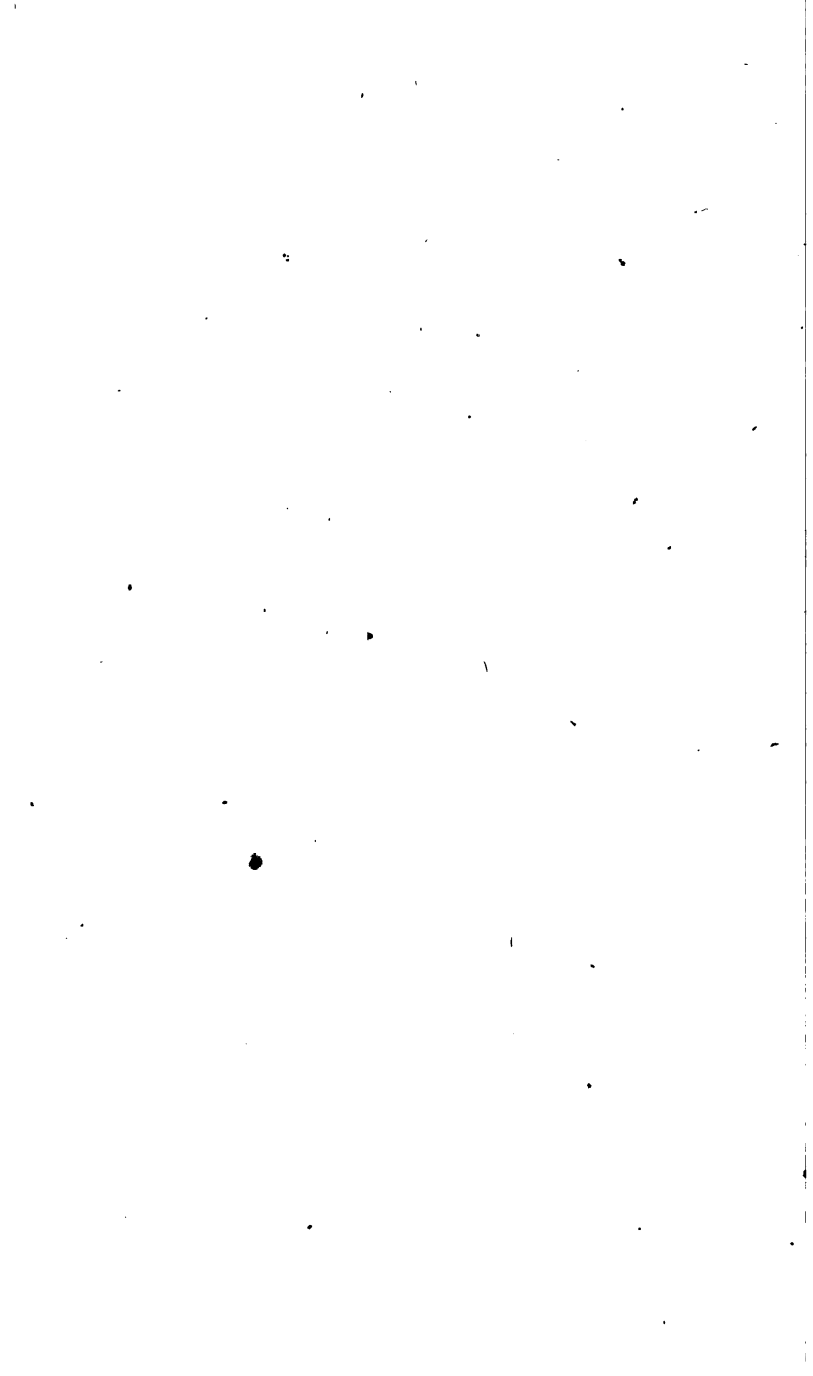
Nov 2<sup>d</sup> 41











# CECIL, A PEER,

A SEQUEL TO

CECIL, OR THE ADVENTURES OF A COXCOMB.

BY

THE SAME AUTHOR.

*Gore*

"LOCUS EST ET PLURIBUS UMBRIS,"

"A frame containing sketches of the world and its wife."

HORACE.

~~IN TWO VOLUMES.~~

*in one*

VOL. I.

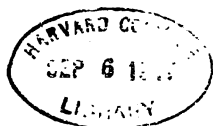
PHILADELPHIA:

LEA & BLANCHARD.

1842.



21482.5.3



Porcellian Club

PHILADELPHIA:  
BARRINGTON AND HASWELL,  
PRINTERS.

---

## P R E F A C E.

---

It is impossible to be sure that, in these days of general mistrust, the atheism of the Public may not extend to a doubt of my identity. — Let the perusal of a few pages suffice to prove that if Ulysses alone could bend the bow of Ulysses, there is but one CECIL to wield the peacock's-quill of CECIL !

I have a great deal more to say for myself ; but it has been so charmingly said of late by the most brilliant of modern French writers, in a review of my memoirs, that I presume to wind up my Preface with his judicious periods : —

“ ‘ CECIL ’ est en effet une composition dont le genre n'était indiqué dans aucune rhétorique ; c'était une bizarrerie nouvelle, même comme bizarrerie ; c'était le plus singulier pêle-mêle de bon sens et de paradoxes, de probité et d'esprit d'enthousiasme et d'ironie, qui fut jamais. Cette fois, les caprices d'Arioste, lorsqu'il brise d'une façon si charmante les divers épisodes de son poëme pour les reprendre à mille lieues plus loin quand reviendra leur tour, étaient complètement dépassés.

“ Dans cette histoire, pas un récit n'est entier, pas un dialogue ; tout se brise tout à la fois ; le fil de l'histoire échappe à chaque instant aux mains du lecteur le plus attentif à le saisir. Pour écrire un pareil livre, il a fallu oublier toutes les règles établies, donner un démenti à tous les usages reçus, affronter tous les périls, toutes les hardiesses, et même quelque chose au delà.

“ A voir tout d'abord cet amoncellement de matériaux sans consistance, — à suivre cette rêverie flottante çà et là dans le plus nébuleux des hasards, à se rappeler ces caprices infinis d'une imagination que rien n'arrête, ni les fleuves, ni les montagnes, on reste ébloui, confondu, hébété, et l'on se demande si l'on n'est pas la dupe de quelque bouffon.

“ Oui ! — mais au fond de cet abîme, dans ce chaos tourmenté, vous voyez surgir de temps à autre d'utiles enseignements, de nobles pensées, des drames touchants et simples, d'éloquentes

protestations en faveur de l'espèce humaine, trop souvent accusée. Le nuage, sans nul doute, le nuage vous fatigue ; la montagne est rude à gravir ; mais aussi, une fois arrivé sur les hauteurs, le nuage s'abaisse à vos pieds, et, du haut de la montagne, vous découvrez tout le paysage d'alentour. Ce livre vous produit l'effet de ces conversations tumultueuses qui n'ont ni commencement ni fin, mais dont le milieu est souvent rempli d'agréments et d'instruction. D'abord chacun dit son mot au hasard, selon sa nature ou son émotion personnelle ; bientôt on se débat à outrance, on réplique à son voisin sans l'avoir entendu ; toutes les opinions contradictoires se heurtent et s'entrechoquent ; mais enfin arrive l'homme sage de la bande ; il parle avec plus de modération et de simplicité que les autres, et, par cela même, on l'écoute. Après quoi, lorsque celui-là a parlé, les tumultueux ont de nouveau leur tour, et la conversation s'achève aussi follement qu'elle a commencé. Tel fut l'effet produit à la première apparition de 'CECIL.' On commença par n'y rien comprendre ; on y trouva ensuite un grand charme, parce qu'on y comprenait quelque chose ; après quoi, en finit par dire qu'on n'y comprenait plus rien. Les critiques furent violentes, les éloges furent passionnés ; une véritable bataille littéraire se livra autour de cette espèce d'apocalypse romanesque. Les uns disaient que c'était un livre charmant, d'une finesse et d'une grâce accomplies ; les autres, que c'était un livre pédantesque, lourd, diffus et difforme. Ceux-ci se récriaient sur la folle gaieté, sur l'admirable bonne humeur de ce bouffon ; les autres soutenaient, au contraire, que ce livre valait surtout par le pathétique des situations, par l'intérêt tout-puissant du drame, par les larmes qu'il faisait répandre. — C'est un vil bouffon, disaient les graves ecclésiastiques, c'est un drôle adorable, s'écriaient les jeunes beaux esprits de la cour. — Eh bien ! les ecclésiastiques et les courtisans, les critiques et les défenseurs, ils avaient tous raison, les uns et les autres : car ce livre était tout cela, bouffon jusqu'à la folie, satirique jusqu'à la folie, pathétique jusqu'aux larmes."

The Edinburgh Review did me noble justice. — The above extract contains the tribute of the Débats. — It remains to be proved *who* next, among the Judges' Trumpeters, will immortalize *himself* by becoming sponsor for the immortality of

ORMINGTON.

# CECIL.

---

## CHAPTER I.

*Il y a fagots et fagots ; et pour ceux que je fais ! — MOLIERE.*

*Somnia sunt non docentis, sed optantis. — CIC.*

It is a trying situation for a fellow who has contented himself for the first fifty years of his life with the slender honours of coterie renown, the fame dispensed through a flageolet rather than a trumpet, to wake one morning, like Byron after the publication of *Childe Harold*, "and find himself famous."

When I took compassion on the dulness of the British public so far as to confide to it the adventures of my days of coxcombry, I enjoyed only the reputation of being an expert pyrotechnist of those flashy squibs and crackers which irradiate the dulness of White's bay window on a rainy day ; a dining-out man, good enough to fill a place when *Alvanley* or *Rokeby*, — *Sydney* or *Sneyd*, — were not to be had ; and was then a wit among lords, as I am now a lord among wits.

My name, however, has become European. The critics, astounded by the vigour of my style and universality of my knowledge, have decided me to be, like *Mrs. Malaprop's Cerberus*, "three gentlemen in one ;" — while the prattlers of *May Fair*, having been assured that I wear a gown, hail me as of epicene gender.

Sinking under the weight of such commendations, dear Public, I appear before you covered with blushes. Like

some popular dancer summoned to the front of the stage by the thunders of your applause, I advance trembling lest the grace of my three bows of acknowledgment should be deteriorated by the pitiless storm of bouquets pelting over my head ; placing my hand on the spot where hearts are said to be, to abide your verdict.

Once fairly before you, however, the footlights of publicity blazing at my feet,—the chandeliers gleaming above,—and three tiers of beauty and fashion cheering me by their plaudits,—the gods waiving their handkerchiefs, the pit its scruples,—I feel the divinity stir within me !—My blushes subside !—Cis Danby is himself again !—“my foot is on my native heath, and my name is Macgregor !”

Meanwhile I trust others are not as sick as myself of the sound of my name. The way in which society has been ~~be~~-Cecilled for the last six months, is really overpowering. Multiform as the cloud of Polonius, I have been pointed out to myself at all the parties of the season,

Wearing strange shapes, and bearing many names !

Methinks there have been *ten* Cecils in the field ; and had I much faith in the doctrine of wraiths and fetches, must long ago have died of consternation, under the influence of apparitions of “the Author of Cecil.” Some weeks ago, I sat by myself at a Greenwich dinner which my other self was invited to amuse ;—and a deuced stupid fellow I was !

On the other hand, if proof against terrors of the Bodach Glas, I have run some risk of being bored to death by disclaimers of the authorship in question. Scarcely a scribbler about town but has essayed to prove to me, in nineteen sections of prose, that *he* was incapable of producing so silly a book as “Cecil,” and that his Club accused him wrongfully ;—that “if he *had* stooped to write a novel, he trusted it would not have turned out quite so inartistic a production ;

A mighty maze, and all without a plan !

without plot, — design, — arrangement, — and with very little moral !” One and all, in short, pride themselves on the conviction that *they* should have produced a Pater-noster Row legitimate, in the style of James ; — while my discursive *illegitimate* was avowedly a loose string of pearls, in the style of Howell and James ; — “*inest sua gratia parvis !*”

The gods give them joy of their taste ! — There are authors enough and to spare who write books regulation-wise ; but for my part, I do not pretend to be in the regulars. I am a Guerrilla — a backwoodsman — anything rather than a gentleman who prattles belles lettres for the delectation of Grosvenor Square, and does small literature for the Annuals. As to your historical three volume novels per rule and compass, with a beginning, an end, and a middle, it strikes me that there is beginning to be no end to them, and they are all middling.

I shall consequently continue to tell my story as I think proper. I consider myself a sort of Moor of Venice, relating my adventures ; and the Public, my gentle Desdemona, “giving me for my pains a world of sighs,” besides a smile or two pretty particularly well worth having.

But it is time, as the man observed who went to see the School for Scandal, that we “should stop talking and begin the play.”

And now, as the Princess Scheherazade used to say, “Where did I leave off ?” — I think, I told you, Beloved Public, — yes, I *certainly* told you, that I had deigned to accept an appointment in the household of George IV., and become a bullion tassel on the garment of royalty. It was an auspicious moment for that sort of gold-lace existence. As in the exhausted receiver of an air-pump all bodies possess equal weight, and a feather has the same importance as a guinea, in the factitious atmosphere of the court of Carlton House, Cecil Danby and Castlereagh, — (great Cas. *bien entendu*) — Jack Harris and the Duke of Wellington — maintained pretty nearly the same specific gravity.

I know not whether my colleagues regarded the affair in so philosophical a point of view as myself ; for we kept

up the same plausibilities towards each other in public as monks of a confraternity when they meet in the street, or as the fellows who "honourable gentleman" each other in a place where they are "*all* honourable men." — From the Lord Chamberlain down to the smallest equerry, we were well-padded, well-spoken, individuals; who went through the Ko-Too of courtly life with the decent gravity of office; — exhibiting the same arduous zeal about the shaping of a waistcoat or gilding of a console, as Burleigh for the signature of a treaty, or Marlborough for the opening of a campaign; — for when the Sovereign is a man of fashion, it is manifestly the duty of his Courtiers to be fribbles.

We bored ourselves however very little with London. Having scarcely a house over our royal heads in the capital, we took refuge from "vulgar Pall Mall's oratorio of hisses" and the rotten apples of Charing Cross, in the happy privacy of our royal country seat; by which judicious retirement, George IV. established himself high in the list of philosophical Kings.

It is clearly the duty of every enlightened monarch to concentrate and display in the highest degree, in his proper person, the national characteristics of his realm. In Spain, it is the business of His most Catholic Majesty to embroider petticoats for the Virgin, like Ferdinand; and suffer himself to be stifled by a brazier rather than violate the laws of etiquette by having it removed by hands not officially qualified for the task. In France, where "*what seems* its head the likeness of a kingly crown has on," the citizen King should wear worsted epaulettes and assume the contour of a Marylebone Volunteer, good-humoured, hearty, and family-mannish, — while agitating in secret a thousand far-sighted plans, — joining in the chorus of the Marseillaise, and keeping a spiked iron-collar round the neck of his house dog.

In Turkey, — but it is scarcely safe to talk about concentrated essence of Mussulmaun; and without further prolixities, I hasten to conclude that, in a country where every man's house is his castle, — where exclusion and exclusiveness form the general principle, — where the public monuments are shut up, — the churches closed,

—and the grand object of every landed proprietor is to wall out or plant out all possibility of being overlooked by the public, it is the distinctive virtue of the throne to be mysteriously unapproachable.

A king of England should possess the ring of Gyges;—a queen should be the Invisible Girl. Their voices should reach the public, like faint and winged echoes; and when laid in the tomb, it should be in the heart of some Cheopsian pyramid, where it would require the lapse of centuries to make out their remains.

This would be strictly in accordance with the spirit of the national character of a metropolis where next door neighbours, so far from loving each other as themselves, put patent locks upon their street doors; and in whose suburbs every rus in urbe is mouldy with an overgrowth of sallows and poplars to secure itself from observation;—and I maintain therefore that the dignified self-seclusion of George IV. was the first of kingly virtues in a man who writes himself upon his penny pieces “D. G. BRIT. REX.”

But the caprices of the English public are the most capricious in the world. When once it is pleased to get up a storm, it blows like a Typhoon from every quarter at once;—and bitter were its gusts and *disgusts* against its anointed sovereign. The public, and the press which is its organ, a barrel organ, wherewith it grinds reasonable people out of patience, chose to declaim against the luxurious indolence of a prince, who was nevertheless undergoing the hard labour of trying to appear young at three-score; and though it was evidently in deference to the whims of the populace who at twenty had adored him as a beau, that forty years long he grieved himself with the vocation, they were strangely out of conceit with the firmness of his Majesty's principles.

But this was no affair of mine. It was not I who fixed the Court at Windsor. I was not accountable for the good taste which caused the mountain to come to Mahomet instead of letting Mahomet toil to the mountain; and if a considerable waste of ministerial post-horses and privy conciliatory patent axles attested that the sign manual was oftener times affixed in the county of Berks than the



county of Middlesex, so much the worse for the Cabinet, — so much the better for the Household.

Since I had ceased to be a denizen of St. James's Street, familiar to its view and disregarded as the old fashioned face of the palace clock, I had begun to think better of myself. Now and then, I glanced meteor-wise across the surface of London society; and as the brilliancy of a shooting star attracts fifty million of times more attention than your matter of fact planet, whose phenomena are duly set down in the ephemeris, I gained much by the rapidity of my transit.

When I *did* appear, it was to some purpose; and I must confess that Mrs. Brettingham had been often in company with Cecil the Coxcomb without dreaming of soliciting the introduction that marked her deference towards the inscription of his name in the ennobling pages of the Red Book.

So conscious was I of this, that I had half a mind to refuse. Kindness, however, is often only refined cruelty; and I resolved to punish her by compliance. Like Tarpeia, she did not know what she had asked for, till she felt the fatal influence of the golden buckler cast at her head.

I approached my victim, however, with a smiling countenance. As the claw of the cat is concealed under the softest fur, I recommend all heroes of romance intent upon lording it over ladies, to remember that Sultanas are strangled with a silken bowstring. I accosted Mrs. Brettingham as Richard the Third the Princess Anne, — all Chesterfield concentrated in my bow, — all Hybla distilling from my lips. She had taken me for a man of straw, — she found me a man of eider-down. My countenance was sunshiny as a Midsummer day, — or a Cuyp, — or a solar lamp.

Sans armes, comme l'innocence, sans ailes comme la constance.

I submitted to be tied to her side like a King Charles's spaniel to the girdle of a court beauty, or a bunch of keys to that of a parsonic housewife.

The consequence was that, vain of her ascendancy,

Mariana was thoroughly off her guard. Secure from offence, defence was superfluous. A shield was useless against "*l'innocence sans armes*;" a cage unnecessary for "*la constance sans ailes*." — There are more ways in heaven and earth of establishing an absolute monarchy than are dreamt of by any one but Cecil Danby or Louis Philippe.

I should have given myself less trouble had I been quite certain of the nature and intentions of pretty Mrs. Brettingham. It is easy to describe a woman in an off-hand way, as marked for conquest, like a tree for the axe by a white cross on the bark. But the policy of female nature envelopes itself in ever-fluctuating robes of gauze, which render it impossible to define the exact outline, or

Catch 'ere she glance the Cynthia of the minute.

The retrospective eye, unpuzzled by such nebulous delusions, sees accurately, and determines safely whether the angel have cloven feet, or the demon silver wings. But so long as the spell be upon one, perpetual misgivings, perpetual recantation of our mistrusts, serve alternately to fan the flickering flame of inclination. Every schoolboy, pre-admonished that the Syrens were scaly monsters with soft faces and sweet voices, is enabled to jest upon the folly of their victims. But the danger of the temptation consisted in the glassy waters, which, concealing their deformities, allowed them to be perceived only as the fairest of the fair.

Sometimes when, recalling to mind hints I had heard hazarded concerning Mrs. Brettingham, I prepared myself to accost her with the easy superiority which a man under such circumstances is sometimes ungenerous enough to assume, I used to be startled and shamed by the child-like simplicity of her countenance. To attribute guile to those clear blue eyes, to connect the idea of duplicity with those mantling blushes, seemed profanation. I felt guilty as if fighting with concealed armour or concealed weapons; and shrunk back, as Pan may have done, when he first beheld his unsightly features reflected in some pure and glassy stream. — At such moments, there was no sacrifice

Mariana might not have demanded of me in atonement of my vile mistrust !

Still, my doubts recurred. She was young, beautiful, accomplished, sprung from a family attached to the decencies of life, — a mother, rich, healthy, happy. What could induce her to hazard the esteem of society by adventuring a decided flirtation with a man of my notorious laxity of principle ?

My sagacious public, — you have guessed it ! — “Cæsar was ambitious.” Mr. Brettingham was a simple gentleman with his half-dozen thousands a year, — a position conferring all the happiness this world can compass if enjoyed with greatness, that is, contentedness of mind. But Mariana’s mind was not contented. She was covetous of the pomps and vanities of life. She loved place and precedence, and could not bear to be confounded in the mob of Thompsons and Johnsons. She wanted to be specific. She knew all the distinctions between the definite and indefinite article prefixed to a name. She was eager to be something — that is, to be somebody ; and since, according to the proverb, “il vaut mieux avoir affaire à Dieu qu’à ses Saints,” conceived it pleasanter to be helped up the steps of the Temple of Fashion by the King, than by those jealous priestesses, the Exclusives, who, however indulgent now, were then as exacting concerning the sixteen quarterings of an aspirant, as a Herald of the Empire examining the claims of a pretendant to some German Chapter or the Golden Fleece.

To reach those recondite shades of Windsor was, however, a difficult matter. I was considered a favourite, — nay, I *was* a favourite ; and Mariana rightly conjectured that the Mrs. Brettingham smiled upon by Cecil Danby had only to engage a house on the Steyne the following winter, to be invited to the Pavilion.

So paltry are the objects of coterie ambition ! — Alas ! the typical apple of the Judaical Paradise was no unseemly emblem of all subsequent motives of female temptation !

## CHAPTER II.

Meanwhile opinion gilds with varying rays,  
 Those painted clouds that beautify our days;  
 Each want of happiness by Hope supplied,  
 And each vacuity of sense, by Pride;  
 Then build as fast as knowledge can destroy;  
 In Folly's cup still laughs the bubble, Joy.

POPE.

Nugis addere pondus. — HOR. EP. 19.

I HAVE perhaps observed before (but truisms cannot be too often repeated, or what would become of parliamentary eloquence?) — that we prize the objects of our affections rather according to the value set upon them by others, than according to our own. In love, as in all else, we must spell by the book; and our passions, like our milestones, are measured from the standard on Cornhill.

Mrs. Brettingham was considered just then, the prettiest woman about town. When her carriage glanced through the park, people stood still to gaze. Her face was limned by Lawrence, and stared at in the exhibition; and I appeal to Boyle Farm, whether it had anything half so pretty at its breakfast? — It was perhaps because conscious the metal was sterling, that she was so eager to have it stamped with the King's countenance.

That she *was* desirous of royal notice, I knew: for by attaining it, she was secure of double the portion of my society. Such at least was the light in which she represented the matter to *me*, or in which I represented it to myself, — and for my own share, felt of course that it would be far from unsatisfactory to have my brilliancy thrown out into relief, in those Pavilion soirées, by such a shadow as the beautiful Mrs. Brettingham constantly attached to my precious person.

But it is no such easy matter to effect innovations in a

royal circle. A new star among the Pleiades, or a new fleuron in the crown, were less difficult to account for, than a new face; nor are the beefeaters keeping guard over the crown jewels more vigilant than the doorkeepers of royal favour!

Still, I determined to do my best, in hopes of Mariana's worst; and flattering her vanity and my own, went on accepting Brettingham's invitations to dinner and his wife's smiles, whenever I derogated by a sojourn in town.

Those were mighty pleasant days!—as one usually says of days that are certain never to recur. Throughout Europe, it was holiday time for people intent upon promoting the greatest happiness of the smallest number. While the fashionable world of London, unchecked by the influence of a female court, did as it listed, in Paris, the person of the new King, Charles X., was so surrounded by Jesuits, both in and out of the order, that he was unable to perceive what was going on at Court; and the Pavillon de Marsan, secure from his paternal surveillance, was playing its fantastic tricks before high heaven in a style which if it made the angels weep, made mortals smile.

Nothing could exceed the brilliancy of the fêtes offered to the young Duchesse de Berri,—that is, not to the young Duchesse de Berri, but to the mother of the heir presumptive of the throne of France. Like the sunshine glaring on the beautiful vineyards of Portici, where the blue sky smiles above and the purple sea gleams beyond, while volcanic fires glow and redden in unsuspected fury below,—all was fair at the Tuileries,—all fair at the Palais Royal. In England, a standing army—in France, a brigade of priests,—the rouge et noir janissaries of modern despots,—enabled that venerable dowager Toryism to smooth the locks and pamper the pride of her spoiled child, Conservatism;—and Intolerance to adapt the keys of St. Peter to the locks of a new Bastille.

Nevertheless, Vesuvius was preparing for an outburst. I know very little about the *côté droit* or the *côté gauche* of Paris politics; inasmuch as it occurs to the place-mongers to announce every now and then, as the *Médecin Malgrè lui* did of the human organization, that they have

*changé tout cela.* But this I remember, that Villèle was the most unpopular minister against whom the cry of impeachment had been raised since the Restoration.

As to English politics, they were pretty much in the state of vicissitude that the human viscera may have been, when changing sides at the instigation of the said Médecin. Canning was recently deceased; — a great man who accomplished little, — a Damascus blade that came to hand when a tomahawk was wanted, — a temple of polished marble, when the wants of the times demanded a structure of unhewn granite. But now that he *was* gone, neither granite nor marble remained. Then came a coalition ministry, — the wretchedest thing in nature; like a spliced mast, sure to give way in a storm. Each moiety of the party was waiting for a favourable opportunity to throw over the others; — and Huskisson, the *Ministre malgré lui*, was the victim.

In Ireland, too, I must admit that the sunshine was overclouded. St. Patrick seemed no longer satisfied to lie still on his gridiron, like the blessed martyr, St. Lawrence; and was beginning to make an outcry. But after all, the outcries of Ireland have never availed her more than the sputtering of an apple while being roasted!

Some there were who saw clearly that though no ostensible change had been accomplished, the first stone of a temple of Liberalism had been laid by Canning, which must eventually find a superstructure.

Whenever I was able to escape from the golden fetters of my royal servitude, or the silken meshes of my *più dolce servitù*, so as to snatch a dinner with my brother in Connaught Place, I clearly discerned, though more from his silence than his words, that Danby contemplated the growing irritability of Europe as that of a long overgorged boa constrictor, beginning to rouse itself for action; and that the long calm we had enjoyed was only the deadly stillness preceding a storm.

The sobriety of mind with which my brother refrained from taking any part in an administration, whose measures, feeble as they were, he had not sufficient ascendancy to fortify, was characteristic of his usual forecast. Again and again, did he refuse high office; for it was useless to

lend the influence of his name, where the influence of his mind was ineffectual.

Herries was sometimes of our party; confident and jactant with all the official self-sufficiency that seems to await, like a wedding garment, the privileged banqueters upon Downing Street loaves and fishes. His reserve of former days was giving way under the influence of a long series of ministerial turtle and venison; and the marrow and fatness of prosperity had opened the heart of the shy man, and the lips of the dumb. He was now a great speaker in the House, and a great talker out of it: but, alas! he *would* persist in speechifying where he was only wanted to talk! I know not *what* he did when wanted to speak, except draw down the cheers of the ministerial benches, as the newspapers daily reported;—but in company he was a bore.

Having once assumed the ministerial plural, he talked Gargantuaciously, like a man talking for his party. “**WE** think,”—“**WE** intend”—“our policy in the East”—“our South American negotiations”—sounded in the mouth of Herries as multivocal as the “Marchons—Combattons!” of the chorus at the French opera, or the “Qual orrore!” of Othello.

I never liked him when he was singular,—I hated him in the plural; and had hardly patience to hear him dogmatizing at my brother’s table,—giving out his platitudes as if decisive as Papal Bulls, because the “we” by which they were fulminated had the authority of the Gazette; while Danby sat by, a patient auditor, with those wise meanings reflected in his quiet eye, which his dictatorial brother-in-law allowed no opportunity to issue from his lips.

For Danby was one, in all the events of life, too wise to contend against the force of circumstances. The secret of true greatness consists in the power of so calculating the concomitants of our position, as to attempt nothing where defeat is probable.—Where is the use of arguing against a man who silences your logic with the thunders of Government authority?—as well attempt to answer the fire of a battery of four and twenty pounders, with a discharge of Oriental pearls!

My brother seldom rose now in Parliament; and the Tory party regarded him as, if not a traitor, an unavailable adherent. On all major points, he voted with the party; and now and then, on the agitation of a question regarding the maintenance of the constitution, upheld the venerable banner with all the vigour of his powerful arm, by one of those mild and expostulative speeches which are the eloquence of the wise. — It was “*la raison avec son filet de voix*” — but the golden thread is of firmer texture than the hempen cable.

Notwithstanding my esteem for Danby, however, there was so little in common between us, that I resorted to his society almost as rarely as to the dreary old house in Hanover Square. He was what is called “lost to the world,” that is, too much absorbed by the world to come. His daughter was growing up. Jane had now attained the age when the dawn of human character casts its golden light before; and Danby saw, or fancied he saw, in the soil turned up by the plough and harrow of the governess, a field worthy of higher cultivation. Such was thenceforward the object of his life. I often noticed to him that Jane was strikingly pretty: but if her father saw in her the making of an angel, it was not an angel of the species which St. James’s Street calls angelic.

All philosophers, they say, have an Utopia, in which they invest the romance (which *they* call wisdom) of their minds. Danby’s Utopia was concentrated in the nature of his child. In her, he hoped to exemplify his idea of excellence and good government; and of a surety, the feminine virtues of her mother, the manly sense of her father, if combined in due proportions, were likely to produce a woman such as these our times have rarely worshipped.

*My* angels, meanwhile, were of a very different calibre; and it was like emerging out of the solemn aisles of Westminster Abbey on a sunshiny afternoon into the stir and bustle of Palace Yard, whenever I quitted the augmentative dinner table in Connaught Place for those gaudy scenes, the excitement of which was becoming essential to my existence.

Happiness is a good thing after forty; — till then, Pleas-



sure is a pleasanter. At twenty, thirty was my date for growing soberly happy ; but when thirty arrived, I knew better. At thirty-five, about the date of which I am writing, I was less certain. In spite of Delcroix, or rather perhaps thanks to Delcroix, there were certain puckerings near the eyes, certain silvery threads perceptible among the curls of Cecil Danby, which would have betrayed themselves to any other eyes than those of Mariana, and which rendered me somewhat suspicious that the time was at hand when I should cease to charm ; and, consequently, when a perpetual tinkling of cymbals might cease to charm *me*.

There was no use in forestalling the epoch. After all, philosophy may do its best to refine our minds, or utilitarianism to vulgarize them, but there is nothing more joyous, so long as the pulse beat high and the nerves remain firmly strung, than the existence whose sunshine is candlelight — whose nightingales are opera singers, — whose nectar, Sillery, — whose ambrosia, bastions de volaille ! All the poetry of civilized life condenses itself into such a destiny as I was then enjoying. The women with whom I whispered were always arrayed in their utmost prodigality of charms ; the men on whom I looked, were ever smiling ; the flowers were in perpetual bloom ; the dinners hot, — the wines cold, — the slaves full of alacrity : the wheels of such a household as that of George the Fourth being greased with *huile à la rose*.

Moreover in spite of crows' feet, in the set in which I lived, I was still "handsome Cecil," — the pet, at five and thirty, of the old boys of sixty among whom I sauntered away my days. If a few grey hairs were perceptible, what would *they* have given to exchange their wigs for such a crop ! If my waist were no longer trimly as in my early days of womanslaughter, what would *they* have given for the manly chest, enabling Meyer to dispense with twenty sheets of wadding in every coat ! Yes ! — I was still an Apollo in that superannuated Olympus !

I suppose I was a bad courtier, for I made no effort to conceal it. Sir John Harris, with a head of hair that might have served as an advertisement for the Macassar oil, was prudent enough to set up a Truefitt as stiff in buckle as the

mane of the lion over Northumberland House ; and I even suspected him of getting up crow's feet with a camel's hair brush, like Farren when, in his boyhood, he made so inimitable a representative of Sir Peter Teazle.

Sweet Sir John was now the very reflected image of the King !— But without intending any reflection, that which is good for Peter is not good for Paul, when Peter is Peter the Great ; and whenever John Harris bored one about shades of sherry, — made his nose red with curaçoa, — or exclaimed with Lear, “ Pray you undo this button,” after a surfeit of green peas at Christmas, — others besides myself wished he had chosen another original for his mimicry. We often voted ourselves Harrissed to death !

Even the King, I suspect, was disgusted with this worse half of his “ double cherry seeming parted ;” — “ *veluti in speculum*” not being a satisfactory proposition, when the glass reflects nothing but deformity.

What was wanted of a man in Harris's position, was rather the power of giving a fillip to the monotony of royal seclusion. When the languor of declining years begins to oppress a prince, or the torpor of exhaustion a man who has lived too fast, unless capable of deriving amusement from books, or solace from ~~THE~~ book, he must *à toute force* be entertained. It does not suffice for *him* as for Cowper, “ from the loopholes of retreat to gaze upon the stir” of the world. He requires an expert acoustician to bring its echoes nearer to his ear. The royal lion must have a decent jackall to fetch and carry news. It is strange how often we divert ourselves with talking about people whom we should consider it derogation to talk *to*, — and if Harris had understood how to make himself agreeable, he would have brought us every day some little chickenbone to pick of London tittle-tattle, instead of strutting about like a jay in borrowed plumes, or a Dublin Aide de Camp.

For there really was a good deal to talk about in London, just then, for those great enough to delight in small talk. There were two or three young fellows of fortune come of age, who were pelting people with their guineas ; and two or three of the prettiest creatures brightening the ball rooms, that ever played the Houri to Christian Turks.

It was the very meridian hour of fashion, — and gorgeous enough for a *coup de soleil*.

Nothing like emulation to quicken the human pulse ! — How does the schoolboy's copy illustrate its capital *E's* ?

“ EMULATION ANIMATES MANKIND,”

ay, and womankind too ! Half the brilliancy of that now disbanded regiment of the gay world called the Exclusives, was owing to the determination of proving to a consortless King, that, in the absence of a female Court, a tribunal might erect itself as illegal perhaps as that which tried and executed King Charles, but nearly as potent.

People are beginning to forget the Exclusives ; I believe because they were written out of fashion by a remarkably bad novel. But they were a curious tribe ; and London society has never been half so condensed, and consequently half so brilliant, since their fortifications were thrown down, their brazen gates demolished, their fosses filled up. Their authority, by the way, arose out of the very un-English policy of centralization. For once, a handful of women acted in unison ; and a new Thermopylæ accredited their prowess.

Nothing like the energy of an opposition for making one aware of the strength of an administration. It was by the rancour of the Excluded that I understood the power of these Exclusives : for Mariana was of the opposition ! — I scarcely know in what consisted the deficiencies that rendered her obnoxious to their coterie. All I perceived on the subject was that, into the inner sanctuary of the Temple of Fashion, Mrs. Brettingham had not made her way.

I seldom made mine ; from no want of the countersign enabling me to enter, — for their high priestess, Lady Grindlesham, was a lady patroness of Cecil Danby as well as of Almack's ; — but because I thought those women a bore. I do not pretend to despise fine ladies ; but a fine lady, according to *my* exposition of the thing, must be a lady so very refined, that her finery is imperceptible ; one of those rare combinations of high birth, high breeding and intelligence, who move through life as

a well-built cutter through the water, without leaving a ripple on the waves; — an object of service and delight to her owners, and of admiration to all the world.

But I hate *laborious* fine ladyism, as heavy and graceless a thing as a gilded Lord Mayor's coach; and the pride, fastidiousness, and prodigality of fuss and money of the Exclusives served only to show how many thousand weight of spangles and feathers are necessary to weigh in the balance against queenly influence in the land. —

O curas hominum, ô quantum est in rebus inane !

Oh ! womankind equally absurd ! to trouble yourselves so sorely with minikin Machiavelism and gilt paper states-womanship ! — how little did your manœuvres effect beyond making yourselves objects of pity to the wise, and odium to the vulgar !

The pride of the Exclusives piqued the multitude to discover a thousand blemishes in their escutcheon, seeing there were many of them who could not have proved even four quarters of nobility ; while their prodigality set the gossips upon ascertaining the amount of mortgages upon the lands of their lords, who were not their masters. Their fastidiousness affixed publicity to a thousand traits of personal frailty or personal defect, which had been otherwise passed over in silence ; — and from all this, they incurred a degree of opprobrium in the coteries, fully equalling the unpopularity of the court with that mightier circle, the public, of which royalty is the centre. Poor Lady Ormington, when occasionally I devoted a vacant evening to her tea-table, was full of wonder at the potency of their sceptre. Even the Saints stood wondering !

“ Ah ! my dear Mr. Danby,” sighed Lady Harriet Vandeleur, whom I met one day at Rivingtons' door, (as I was coming out of the adjoining silk-mercier's, where I had been giving a design for a new waistcoat piece for his Majesty,) — “ what a lamentable thing to see poor dear Lady Grindlesham so wedded to the levities of life, as to be playing the girl in a hair head and gauze tunic, with her son gaining prizes at Cambridge ! — If her eldest had been a daughter, you know, she might have been a

grandmother these three years! — Yet you see she fancies herself sixteen! — Poor deluded soul! if her eyes could but be opened by —”

Hastily interrupting her, — for I saw that her Ladyship was setting in for a cant, and an easterly wind was cutting us in quarters much as I suspect she was about to do — Lady Grindlesham, — I assured her I made it a duty to remain blind to the faults of a pretty woman, more especially when, as in Lady Grindlesham’s case, a particular friend.

“A particular friend?” — reiterated Lady Harriet, and instantly drawing me back into the vestibule of the shop she was quitting, (what a locale for scandal-mongery!) “in that case,” said she, “you would infinitely oblige me by speaking to her in favour of my cousin Lady Jane O’Callaghan, who has two daughters she wants exceedingly to get to Almack’s this season. The first subscription, my dear Mr. Dauby, will not begin for this month to come; so we have plenty of time before us. To say the truth, I wrote three times to Lady Grindlesham, without getting an answer. At last, I sent her a list of Lady Jane’s family connections, to prove that I had not troubled her for a person not fully qualified to grace her list. And what do you think she had the insolence to do? — I had ‘dear Lady Grindleshamed’ her, — having intimately known her father, — I was going to say her grandfather, but I believe she never had one; — and in return, she presented me her compliments, and begged me to address my communications to her at Willis’s rooms, where they would be attended to at the proper time. — Did you ever hear of such a thing!”

“Not often of anything so reasonable from so fine a lady!” was my cool reply.

“But I tell you, my dear Mr. Danby, Lady Jane O’Callaghan is daughter to the Earl of O’Shaughnessy, — whose Barony is of Henry the Seventh’s time; and her husband is the eldest son of the Catholic Lord O’Flaherty, — whose ancestors were Kings of ———”

“Spare me, dear Lady Harriet!” cried I, struggling to get away from this O-verwhelming pedigree, “you have said enough to convince me that your protégées have

every chance of exclusion. You must be aware that the Patronesses have a decided objection to——, but I will not say what might offend you in the persons of your cousins. Let me recommend you to drop the connection in your correspondence with Lady Grindlesham, or I will not answer for her not dropping you. If she and her sisterhood were not to do saucy things, such people as the descendants of Henry the Seventh's Barons would not care to go to Almack's. Meanwhile, I recommend their enlightenment to your prayers. — But your ladyship's carriage is driving off— will you give me leave?"

And *in* I handed her, — looking penknives with sixteen blades at me; while I who, fifteen years before, used to thrill to the heart's core at the touch of her hand, shrugged my shoulders as she drove away. And yet, the worldliness I thought despicable in her at fifty, was only the same worldliness I had thought charming at thirty-five; saving that the hypocrisy which then made her a prude, now rendered her a bigot. There was, however, a small balance of rouge and pearl powder to be deducted from the latter account, which had been one of the weightiest sins of the former.

Such were the Exclusives; and such the ninnies upon whose follies their empire was founded. It is now a thing of tradition! — Exclusivism, fashionable novelism, Nashism, and fifty other fribbleisms of the West-end, were utterly extinguished by the Reform Bill; like certain fungi which, when trodden under foot, explode into dust, "leaving not a wreck behind."

The Exclusives were, perhaps, obliged to invent their vocation in order to afford an object to their otherwise aimless existence; for if Idleness be the mother of the vices, — Ennui is the parent of half the follies of mankind. What things we used to do at Windsor to get rid of that *dolce far niente*, which may be *dolce* enough as the leisure of contented minds, but which is bitter as colocynth, or the pleasantries of \* \* \* \* \* when borne as an official burthen. — "Oh! the curse of having to amuse an un-amusable prince!" wrote a female Cis Danby of the last century, — who had probably been spending the morning in choosing flies, and drawing patterns of purple velvet and

white satin fishing-books with enamelled clasps, to contain them, — or dressing mother of pearl rods and golden hooks, to capture the gudgeon of the Virginia water of Versailles.

I could a tale unfold, as amusing as instructive. But the man who hath taken wages for his service, hath taken them also for his discretion. Were I to find that O'Brien amused his brother tidewaiters (for I have done an Honourable master's duty by him, and provided for him in the Customs), with a sketch of my Life and Times in Hanover Square, I would — no ! not have him kicked, I would say he acted like a footman ; and should feel deserving the same ignominious stricture if I did not hasten to close the chapter.

Vivendum recte est cùm propter plurima tunc his  
Præcipue causis, ut linguas mancipiorum  
Contemnas !

---

### CHAPTER III.

Fair Britain, in a monarch blest,  
Whose virtues bear the strictest test ; —  
Whom never faction could bespatter,  
Nor minister nor poet flatter :  
What justice in rewarding merit !  
What magnanimity of spirit !  
What lineaments divine we trace  
Through all his figure, mien and face :  
Tho' peace with olive bind his hands,  
Confest the conquering hero stands.  
Hydaspes, Indus, and the Ganges,  
Dread from his hand impending changes ;  
And Yankee, Tartar, and Chinese,  
Short by the knees intreat for peace. — SWIFT.

THE Dean has forestalled all that my loyalty would otherwise have dictated ; but under cover of our united flourish of trumpets, I suppose I may presume to whisper

to the public that I found the thralldom of my golden chains almost as irksome as if they had been formed of baser metal.

"*Chassez le naturel, il revient au galop,*" says the poet, or the proverb created by the poet; and the artificiality of my compelled existence caused me after a time to yearn for the simplicities of life, as a fish gasping on the sand after the limpid waters.

It is a horrible thing to resign the privilege of being out of health, — out of spirits, — out of temper. Even the sun, to palliate the monotony of its existence, is sometimes permitted to shine through a cloud. But a courtier, — "*homme sans humeur et sans honneur,*" — must be an incarnate smile, — an instinctive affirmative, — a symbol of obsequious acquiescence; his "nay" must be so modulated so as to sound like "yea"; his dissent must be so accoutred as to resemble accordance, like its twin brother. He is invited frankly to declare his opinions, because he is pre-understood to have no opinions but those of his august master; and his independence of speech is much like that of Punch's dog, trained to bark at its wooden master, in order that it may be rapped reprovably on the pate for the recreation of the bystanders.

Even the satisfaction of eating, drinking, and sleeping more luxuriously than elsewhere, is marred by the drawback of being unable to eat, drink, and sleep in one's own time and place; and the seclusion which was sport to his Majesty, was death to me. I had not been threescore and five years on the boards, to render me disgusted with

The fickle breath of popular applause.

Pall Mall had never hissed *me*. No Chancellor had betrayed me into odious measures by the promise of a divorce, and left me in the lurch to be twitted by my wife, and pelted by the rabble. I was consequently enough in sorts with mankind to sigh after the acclamations of society. I could have endured the weight of my golden chains, if permitted to rattle them for the admiration of the vulgar; but to have to play Lord Grizzle without an audience, made me painfully aware that I was playing



Lord Grizzle. The surliness of my soul under the comic mask I was condemned to wear, made me fully understand the hypochondriacism of Carlini — the Grimaldi of Paris — who wept under his harlequin's dress while the public laughed at his lazzi.

The shepherds who were good enough to remain contented in the "*bella età di oro*," and the vale of Tempe, had never read a newspaper, or applauded Malibran; and I swear there were moments when I should have preferred an attic in Bury Street, as the most abject of younger brothers, to that gorgeous Castle, — to that Apician menu, — to —

But, no! — I cannot permit myself to say a word against the park. — Though, during the early days of my service in the Household, it had been pain and grief to me to traverse that portion of the royal domain adjoining Forest Lodge, I had become inured to it as one does to any moral torture; for it is only such pangs as a toothache or the *tic-douloureux* which habit does nothing to assuage. And now, my favourite refuge from my weariness of spirit, was to ride off alone into those verdant glades, philosophizing, like Jacques, among the drooping trees; and I verily believe occasionally mistaken by the officers of His Majesty's Household Brigade, through the mists of an autumnal day, for the spirit of Herne the hunter.

One pleasant afternoon in October, — (it was October I remember, because Lord — and Sir — — my colleagues in waiting, were gone pheasant shooting in the preserves towards Englefield Green,) I was sauntering on horseback in one of the grassy by-ways of the park, noting the golden tinge upon the beech trees as contrasted with the thick, dark, unchangeable foliage of an adjoining thicket of hollies, moralizing, (for an autumnal day is apt to bring on severe attacks of morality,) upon the — but why trouble the public with my moralizations, when I am on the brink of an interesting episode; — when, lo! I beheld at no great distance a pony chaise dragged furiously along, with two ladies for its occupants, by a pony which for its size might have been carried off in their arms, but which by its spirit, which was an evil spirit, seemed to be carrying *them* the Lord knows whither.

The weather was not too hot to make exertion dis-

agreeable ; and I consequently rode up, — seized the little beast by the bit, — and effectually stopped its career ; but in the operation, no matter whether by my bungling or the pony's, the chaise was dragged over the stump of a tree, and overturned.

I had nothing to apprehend of loss of life or risk of limb to the heroines of the adventure ; and even had their peril been greater, there was nothing in their dress or equipage (all I knew of them at present) to engage any *very* earnest sympathies in their behalf. I had consequently some difficulty in refraining from a smile at the absurd figure they cut when emerging from the thorny thicket into which they had been precipitated ; — their faces scratched and bleeding, — their green veils torn into shreds ; while the pony stood trembling and panting, effectually tamed by the incumbrance of the overturned chaise at its heels.

To conceal the inopportune hilarity of my countenance, I was glad to turn away and fasten my horse to a neighbouring holly tree, ere I proceeded to offer my services towards the re-instatement of ladies, chaise, and pony, in their proper juxta-position.

This was easy enough ; for the chaise was as light as it becomes a pony chaise to be. But, during the process, I discovered that there were tears as well as blood upon the cheeks of my new acquaintances. I could stand the scratches, — I could not stand the tears. I now began to be sorry for them in right earnest. Besides, a fit of hysterics would have been tremendous in the thick of the forest, without so much as a green ditch at hand ; and I had no mind to convert my André into a Goffredo's helmet, for the benefit of a Clorinda, — name unknown.

However, they thought better of it, and did not faint ; but simply expressed to each other their determination not to entrust themselves again to the recreant pony to return home. I say "SIMPLY expressed" advisedly ; for they spoke with such lady-like simplicity, that I felt I had done wrong in undervaluing them ; and, accordingly, put a great deal of Cecil Danby into my offers of further service.

On my entreating them to let me fetch a person from the nearest gate, who would undertake to convey home

their carriage and take charge of my horse, while I became their escort, they complied with the good sense which makes submission to a necessity appear an act of grace.

It was not till I returned from the lodge with one of the under-keepers, who, knowing me to be one of the household, was as obsequious as a page in waiting, that I made inquiry of my fair friends touching the "home" to which chaise, pony, and selves were to be transported; — when it appeared that they resided at Sunning Hill; and that, even to persons acquainted with the cross-cuts of the forest, we had a three-miles march before us!

I have said that the weather was not so sultry as to make exertion objectionable, yet I confess my prospects staggered me. Moreover, it was so late in the afternoon, that gallop back as I might, my credit for punctuality, the politeness of Kings, but the duty of Kings' guests, was in considerable danger. I was at all times a reluctant pedestrian. I hated walking, and my boots hated walking. However, I was in for it. There was no choice. Besides, a walk in the forest with two anonymous ladies, had at least the charm of novelty; and

*est natura hominum novitatis avida.*

Off we set, therefore; pausing a few minutes at the lodge to purify the faces of my companions, and refresh their spirits by a little cold water externally and internally distributed; and a right curious predicament we stood in, — for by the obsequiousness of the lodge-keepers, they saw clearly that their unknown champion was somebody, — perhaps a nobleman — perhaps a prince; while I had reason to opine that they were nobody, — for the name of Silwood Cottage seemed altogether new and strange to the keeper of our King's deer, who might be supposed to know something of the notabilities of the neighbourhood. But, at all events, they were charming nobodies. Their faces, after ablution, proved to be just the sort of faces that tempt one to look and look again, from the certainty of never finding them in statu quo; — endless variation of bloom — unceasing changes of expression. Both were dark-haired, — both brunettes; but the eyes of one were sleepy brown, and the other variable grey: — they were "alike — but oh! how different."

For the first half mile, I was desperately in love with the sparkler; for the next mile and a half, with the more languid beauty. For half a mile to come, I could hardly say with which; and for all that remained of our walk, very decidedly with both.

By this time, too, I had discovered that my soft beauty was called Annie, and my bright one Soph,—to abbreviate Sophia, as I then supposed; though it afterwards turned out to be Sophronia.

But what else?—Miss, or Madam, or my Lady?—Were they married or single?—maids, wives, or widows?—How was I to guess?—I could not ask them; and all my hints and guesses on the subject proved to little purpose.

It was, as I have said, October,—the very season for a walk to such as delight in such efforts. The skies were bright, yet the sunshine was tempered by such freshness in the air, as rendered it exciting rather than oppressive. The grass was elastic,—the foliage varied as if touched up by Turner in one of his paroxysms of *tinto-mania*. The hips and haws were red on the bushes, the mountain-ash berries on the tree; and the robin was beginning to pipe in the hedges his autumnal grace before meat.

My companions noticed these things, like persons accustomed to take pleasure in country sounds and sights; made no complaints of fatigue; well-bred enough to know that any murmur against their present plight might be interpreted into distaste of their companion.—I saw, at once, that *they* were not Exclusives!

They made no allusion to Windsor; and might have been living at Kamschatka for anything they seemed to know or care about the court. At first, this delighted me; for I had the silly vanity of fancying myself a sort of *Il Bondocani* or Knight of Snowdon among them; and determined to burst upon them in the sequel, or at some future time, arrayed in all the splendours of a Mandarin of the royal button.

But at last, I grew almost impatient of their carelessness of courtly things: and for the life and soul and philosophy of me could not refrain from certain startling allusions to Windsor, intended to excite their curiosity.

I might as well have made them to the robins!—No.

result ! — Not so much as the interchange of a glance between Soph. and Annie purporting to say — Who on earth have we got with us ?

For my own share, though on most occasions an expert guesser, I own I reached their garden paling without the most distant surmise as to the Mrs. or Miss——hood of my companions. A family likeness proclaimed them sisters, though I have seen cousins almost as resembling ; and they were decidedly Creoles, — for one of the charms of their animated conversation consisted in comparisons between the green thickets of the forest and a certain home of theirs among the feathery trees of the tropics ; and they talked of their Caribbean sea and its surf and coral reefs, with a poetry of diction that brought my friend Tommy Moore and his Nea only too vividly to my mind. For, as I live by bread, it was not good to be thinking of Nea and Tommy Moore, and acting champeron in a green forest to two young beauties who talked so far above singing.

However, I managed to think of *them* rather than *him*, and a little perhaps of His Majesty ; — for though earnestly pressed to stay and partake of a dinner, the modest preparations of which were perceptible through the French windows of a pretty cottage opening through a rustic portico to the lawn, I refrained. I merely asked permission to make early inquiries after the health of my charming companions, mounted my horse, (which a pricker from the lodge had brought to the cottage gate full twenty minutes before our arrival,) and away back to Windsor, — back to gilt plate and Persian carpets, — iced hock and val de penas, — lobster lets and *blanc de faisan au céleri*, — the kotoo of courtiership and the listlessness of those human vegetables, those lichens encrusting the stately fabric of a court, who, with the gleanings of all the last echoes of all the cities of Europe to feed their hungry ear, still crave for news, — news, — news ; — and would fain have new wars, fresh earthquakes, and a pestilence or two, invented for the relief of their ennui ! — My beloved brethren of the Red Book,

Homunculi quanti sunt, cum recogito !

## CHAPTER IV.

Eventful day! how hast thou changed my state!  
 Once, on the cold and winter shaded side  
 Of a bleak hill, mischance had rooted me!  
 Transplanted now to the gay sunny vale  
 Like the green thorn of May, my fortune flowers!

HOMER.

Respicere exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo  
 Doctum imitatore, et verras hinc ducere voces.

HOR.

I HAD not surmised that any earthly thing could keep me awake so nearly all night, — except an indigestion after a macédoine containing too much melon, — as my incertitudes concerning Soph. and her sister: — not so much who they were or what they were, as what they thought of me!

The occasion was excellent as a meritometer. They were unprejudiced judges, — enabled to decide upon me only as an animal standing betwixt earth and sky, — with whom they had conversed freely for three-quarters of an hour: and who had done his very *very* best to make those three-quarters of an hour pass like *one*!

I said not a word to any one of my adventure; and my fever of impatience rose all the higher, as a case of suppressed curiosity thrown into the system. But I was resolved to ride over to Sunning Hill the following day, and ascertain all that was to be ascertained, good, bad, or indifferent, respecting my new friends. Anything but the last! — I could bear to find them right or wrong; but if they proved to be mediocre, commonplace people, I was prepared to turn Saladin's head back to Windsor for good and all, without further care for my heroines.

Homme propose — Roi dispose!

The little Queen of Portugal came to visit us. Her Majesty was just then in abeyance in England; which has always been made a sort of warehouse for bonded sove-

reigns. My morrow was right royally monopolized, ay, and even the following day: and thus, I had two more sleepless nights, — the last, positively insupportable; — for I was hunted by visions of niggers and plantations, — yams and centipedes, — all the mockeries with which the mystery of somnabulic association invests its visions. Sometimes Soph, sometimes Annie, was Nea; sometimes I was Tommy Moore, — sometimes Clarkson or Wilberforce; — and together we wandered among the mangroves, and plucked the bread-fruit; which I conclude was the forbidden fruit, — for close beside it lay coiled a snake, awful as the great Land Serpent of Paradise, or the Anaconda of Monk Lewis!

But enough for the patience of the public if I favour it with my day dreams, leaving out of the question the nightmares of my unrest. On the third day, I was on the way to Sunning Hill at an early hour. My services were sure of not being under requisition at Windsor. There was a Cabinet Council. The gravities of death-warrants and such like cares of state were going on: — no Cis Danby, — no mother-of-pearl fishing rods for the present!

Silwood Cottage was just the sort of house where one might venture to make one's appearance at an unseemly hour. Soph and her sister were evidently distinct from the Order with whom, as Hajji Baba informs us, it is an act of criminality to be ignorant whether round spoons or oblong are to be used for such and such purposes of the table. They were thoroughly unconventionized. The Creole blood flowed too vividly in their veins to admit of such icy subjection. — However, I had an anterior object to Silwood! — At a certain little village inn, in the neighbourhood, called the Rising Sun, dwelt an honest man whom I had found occasion to befriend while Danby was the tenant of Forest Lodge, and to whom I determined to apply for information, in order that I might read the riot act to my wild imaginations, in case the heroines of the pony chaise were unworthy of leading me into danger.

"To be sure he knowed them ladies!" was his reply to my cross-examination. "There varnt better nor kinder ladies in the willage. Nobody but 'ud go through fire and vater for 'em. — Yes! they *was* sisters, one on 'em married

—one on 'em single: couldn't say which was which. They vas Vestingines. Mr. Greysdale the 'usband was away and expected back; and they lived quiet and retired, and seed no company during his absence."

This was dreadfully satisfactory! I began to suspect that the anaconda near the bread-fruit tree must be a prototype of myself; and Saladin evidently thought so too, —for five minutes afterwards, I was ringing at the gate of the Cottage.

ALEXANDER, my fine fellow! —in spite of thy adnomen of GREAT, thou wast a man of little mind who couldst despond after new worlds to conquer; as if it were necessary for the planets to be whirled out of their spheres to accomplish such a mystery! — Why the world is *full* of new worlds! — In the way of difficulties to be overcome, every next street contains the embryo of a conquest of Persia; while almost every park paling surrounds the germ of a romance, such as would put Pyramus and Thisbe, or Romeo and Juliet, out of countenance. — Be it observed, by the way, *en passant*, that the last century and the present have failed to add a single classical couple to the muster roll of Cupid. Among wrong people, I believe, St. Preux and Julie are sometimes quoted; and to my thinking, Scott's Master of Ravenswood and Lucy Ashton are worth all the Petrarchs and Lauras that ever were tied together in poetical true lover's knots. But I doubt whether even these will receive legitimate Paphian Canonization. If any worthy pairs, therefore, have pretensions to this species of immortality, and purpose applying to the Dunmow of Cyprus,

Cuneti adsint, meritæque expectent præmiæ palmæ!

Such vagaries as these, however, were not passing through my mind while waiting at the cottage gate that my card might be taken into Mrs. Greysdale. — I was merely guessing whether that matronly title belonged by right to Annie or Soph; for worlds depended to me upon the solution of the enigma.

Impossible to determine! Annie was alone when I entered: and offered me her hand so cordially, that I was too much flattered to notice whether she alluded to



her sister's absence as to that of the lady of the house, or merely as regretting that "Soph" would lose the pleasure of my visit. — The next minute, I was too much charmed to find myself seated in a lounging chair not half a yard from her work-table, to trouble myself further about the matter.

It is only boys who adore the belle of the ball room : those who have attained years of discretion abhor the meretricious delusions of white satin and blonde lace.

To the eyes of all men worthy the name, a woman never looks more charming than in the disarray of a morning visit ; her dress simple — her cheeks unheated, — her manner easy. — She is then, *herself*. — No false excitement, no vain coquetry. How much more indicative of the wife, the gentle companion, the fireside friend, than when fluttering through the mazes of a waltz with roving eye and moistened skin, a mark for the audacity of the unprincipled, and the pity of the wise.

This really *was* passing through my mind, as I watched the taper fingers of Annie manœuvring her needle now under, now over, the white canvass of her delicate little tapestry frame ; ever and anon stopping short in her work, and throwing back her curls which had fallen forward while stooping over her work, as she looked smilingly in my face, to answer some question, or propose another.

She placed me at my ease at once, by showing me that I was no obstacle to her occupations ; yet not too much at my ease, by giving me reason to suppose my presence an absorbing interest, — dividing her attention pretty equitably betwixt me and her lambswools.

I never saw a sweeter countenance, — a face of so fine an oval, — or curls more soft and glossy. People incurious in human physiognomy, think it a fine thing to assert that nature has but a single mould for peer and peasant — the duchess and her waiting-woman. Right, perhaps, as far as Nature is concerned ! But Art, her hand-maiden, is a mighty disfigurer of her performances ; and let any one whose time is passed exclusively in royal circles, where every feature is trained and every expression calculated, turn for a second to some kind, fair, guileless visage, whose conciliations are instinctive, and which

exercises without shame its smiles and tears, because they are nature's indications of sensibility, as much as our eyes are given us to see or our ears to hear, — and he will instantly admit the wondrous difference between the lady of nature's ennobling, and the lady of the king's.

I don't know why, but I had always entertained a horror of Creoles. There was an unavowed association in my mind between them and niggers and brown sugar, — calibashes and cowries, — with a little touch of the yellow fever. I fancied them inert, sawney (is *sawney* a corruption of *sournois*?) and though peppery as their own pimento, sickening as their guava. I could not bring myself to fancy them real right earnest ladies. They seemed destined to be put in spirits, like other Caribbean insects, or stuffed for a museum.

I knew better now. I knew *much* better soon. For as Soph. did not make her appearance during my visit, I asked permission to renew it; and Annie looked so pleased, at the proposal, that I was bound to consider her Mrs. Greysdale, and to conclude that, with an unmarried sister, she was still ignorant of my being a younger brother.

Blockhead that I was! — fine gentleman, rather, that I was! — These people knew no more of peerage jargon or exclusive impertinence, than I of those islands of the West which I now recognised as the fatherland of all that is sweetest in the world, — let alone sugar canes. They were genuinely glad to see me; — first, as a well-bred stranger who had promptly assisted them in an emergency; afterwards, as an agreeable acquaintance, who took pleasure in their society.

Mrs. Greysdale, as if aware of the pranks my imagination was playing at their expense, not only frankly declared herself, at my second visit, in the person of Annie; but presented her sister to me as Miss Vavasour, with all the terseness of one of Dante's free-spoken heroines in the *World of Shadows*.

Ricordati di me che son la Pia.  
Sienna mi fè — disfecemi Maremma :

that is, she told me that, born in Jamaica, they had been

educated in England; and that falling into ill health shortly after her marriage with her Creole cousin, Richard Greysdale, she had been despatched to England, with her sister, for change of air; had settled herself at Sunning Hill, for the benefit of a purer atmosphere than London, and the advantage of vicinity to a royal physician; and that early in the spring, her husband and father would arrive to convey them back to their native country.

It was difficult so to qualify my congratulations on the benefit she said she had derived from the English climate, as to express my regret at her object being so far accomplished as to justify her departure.

"I own we are becoming impatient to get away," said Mrs. Greysdale, too little covetous of empty compliments to perceive my dilemma; "I was right glad to settle here. Severe illness is apt to make one selfish; and all I cared for was the freshness and the shade that promised me revival. But now that we have been living here for six lonely months, and I have got well enough to think of Sophronia as well as myself, I am beginning to discover that forest scenery is a very pleasant addition to a sociable home: but that a long evening passes all the better for a plurality of voices. My health has not allowed me to mix in the society here. Soph. is too kind to leave me; and I am beginning to pity her sufficiently to wish for Mr. Greysdale and my father's arrival, to restore her to the pleasures of her age."

When I came to know my new friends better, I could not help perceiving that Miss Vavasour's tastes were those of any age but her own; and that she was much more likely to enjoy the converse of nature in the open air, and books under a cheerful roof, than the society of drawling nigger-drivers—that hateful cross betwixt Cockney and Yankee,—or even the tabby coteries of Sunning Hill.

Sophronia was a rare creature. I have no doubt there might exist, even amid the exceeding coarseness of my own fine world, women as lavishly endowed by nature. But these are mostly ruined by overtraining,—these are forced into excessive bloom by the hot-house of education. Sophronia Vavasour's mind had expanded as nature listed.

A few years at a good English school had done little to tame down the lofty spirit of the young islander ; albeit affording those elements of learning which now enabled her to find in her own mind a happy substitute for the puerilities of gossip life.

“ Have a mind and examine it ! ” — might form a noble parallel to the dictum of Mickiewicz — “ have a *heart* and examine it ? ” — I verily believe that if one of Lady Winstanley’s daughters had been told to have a mind and examine it, she would have had a mind to blush, as for some indecent proposition. But Sophronia Vavasour not only had a mind and *had* examined it ! She did not bore one with the result of her examination. Though entertaining very decided opinions upon almost every subject, she rarely gave them utterance, unless piqued into it by the arguments wherewith I delighted to stimulate her spirit, because, when controverting my paradoxes, her dark grey eyes seemed to deepen into gentian blue, when contrasted with the vivid blushes painting on her noble face the earnestness of her soul.

Mrs. Greysdale delighted in hearing us dispute. The languor of indisposition still hung over her. She was, at best, less strong of mind and body than her sister ; and there would she sit, on a sofa near the open windows, her eyes fixed on the upslanting lawn, towards the centre of which was a flower plot still bright with China and monthly roses, — as if to avoid watching the eagerness of our controversy.

On *my* part, of course, this fervour was assumed. I cared not a split straw whether Slavery were abolished, or Africa christianized, or Catholics held cheap, or corn dear. But Sophronia, warm with all the best instincts of humanity, felt what she spoke, and looked what she felt, and felt so beautifully, — that I was often troubled in my casuistry by the eloquence of her eyes.

For while the poor girl fancied that the outpourings of her pure soul conveyed nothing but the plainest common sense, they expanded into a stream of the choicest poetry. The common sense of nature *is* poetry. It is only by affecting to improve nature, we ever fall into vulgarity.

This new acquaintance of mine, proved in short a won-

derful relief to the monotony of discussing bills of fare, and tailor's bills, and bills of rights and bills of wrongs,— and bills for the prevention of this and suppression of that,— which supplied us with our very small talk at the Castle. I accepted the godsend of Mrs. Greysdale's and her sister's intelligent conversation, as one drinks a glass of mineral water in the morning, to assist the digestion of the day ; and having kept sacred and secret an adventure which I knew would expose me to quizzing without end, used to steal away on horseback to Sunning Hill, twice or thrice in the week, as slyly as if in pursuit of a *bonne fortune*.

The sisters took no pains to attract me ; that is, they attempted no allurements having any ulterior object. Mr. Greysdale was an affluent man, and his wife and her sister co-heiresses to a noble fortune. The simplicity of their modes of life was the result of choice and indisposition ;— and had Sophronia chosen to appear in the world, her beauty and dowry might have secured her a far better match than a younger brother like myself. But the genuine friendship they entertained for me was as deadly a bait as the most expert chaperonical fisher of men could have devised ; and I was as fairly hooked, as if angled for, a whole season at Almack's.

A man does not know what he is about, under such circumstances. Strolls in green lanes, drives and rides in the forest or over the springy elastic paths of Bagshot or Ascot, seem nothing, at the time, but strolls and rides and drives ; and one goes on talking and listening, — listening and talking, — till one discovers, at the close of a certain number of weeks, that one has fallen, — no, not fallen, — sauntered, — desperately in love.

Snatches of sober argument recur to one's mind, as one is riding home after such a visit : and one fancies one has been doing nothing but argue, — not perceiving that they recur accompanied by the outline of a delicate nose or dimpled chin. Reminiscences of a noble sentiment steal back into one's soul, as one is closing one's eyes on one's pillow ; and it does not appear that half the charm of the recollection consists in mellifluous tones, that linger on the ear like those of some favourite melody.

One day, in a fit of Cecil Danbyism, I was doing fan-

tastical, either to surprise my fair auditresses, or to fool away the vapours of too much hock, in which I had indulged the preceding evening; and began to jest upon the enthusiasm with which Sophronia was describing a scene of her own loved island of the west, which sounded to me exceedingly like a pilfer from Paul and Virginia.

"I abhor what is called fine scenery!" said I, as languidly as any Creole could have uttered it. "I never wish to fatigue my eyes with a wider contemplation than this pretty little lawn, with its drooping larch yonder, and the old elm tree in the corner. Are there not painters in the world to bring rocks and glaciers to us, and save the cost and care of travel? One might buy a Claude for half the cost of a journey to Greece: and a fine Salvator for the amount of a tour in the Abruzzi, without reckoning the risk of being shot by briganti in the attempt."

"How easy it is to discover when Mr. Danby is talking from his heart, and when for effect," observed Sophronia, with a smile, suddenly addressing her sister. "No, no! you do not think a syllable you are saying to-day! You are only good-natured enough to startle our rusticity with a little rhodomontade."

Mrs. Greysdale attempted to cheek her sister — but Sophronia was in the vein to be candid.

"Do you remember, Annie," said she, "how, the day of our first strange meeting with Mr. Danby, we were surmising after he left us who or what he might be, — and I told you at once he was of the court, courtly?"

A glance at my precious person conveyed a hint that this was no great stretch of perspicacity.

"You are mistaken!" said she, replying to my look, "it was *not* your dress, — it was *not* your manners. The young gentleman who comes from Bond Street to tune our piano, is quite as affable, and much more dressy."

"The people at the Royal Lodge, probably, afforded you some little insight into my condition, as a pretext for your doing me the honour of admitting me to your acquaintance," said I, with considerable bitterness, for I was stung home.

"No — it was your *voice*; — it was the hypocritical modulation of your voice that satisfied me you had moved

in the best society," replied Miss Vavasour, with provoking coolness. "I saw that you were 'a most delicate monster;' that you had a voice for me, and another for Annie, — a third for the pony, — a fourth for the lodge-keepers: — there was nothing natural about you!"

"Except my undisguised admiration for my newly-made acquaintances," said I, in a tone of such genuine fervour, that Sophronia was forced to add — "Why, to own the truth, you *did* appear to like us; and that was encouragement enough for us to like you in return, — and upon trust."

"I trust I have redeemed my credit?" continued I, in the same tone: and these sort of allusions, often renewed, brought us to the very verge of something more than the mere acquaintanceship to which it was desirable we should restrict ourselves.

Not that I was any longer in doubt as to the object of my preference. Mrs. Greysdale's gentle languor was, in the long run, far less attractive than the ready flow of Miss Vavasour's conversation. But I was not so blinded by her merits, as to be unaware that we should make an ill-assorted couple, — with all the disparity between us of eighteen years' difference of age, to say nothing of those of birth and fortune.

In order, therefore, to keep the sisters blind to the impropriety of my frequent visits, under such circumstances, it behoved me to abstain from even those common overtures of courtesy, which sometimes startle a woman into remembering that there exists a hubbub which calls itself the world, wherein are tongues both forked and venomous. I assumed, therefore, with them a tone of seniority for which, though entitled by my years, I did not feel myself by any means qualified by sentiment or appearance; for, like Anacreon, I fancied that my grey hairs added new brilliancy to the rosy garland of love; a sentiment which I forbear to give in the original, out of respect for the country gentlemen.

Sophronia was a charming musician. The best music of all countries was familiar to her. But sometimes, in her *very* holiday moods, her sister would persuade her into favouring us with certain exquisite ballads, of which she

always *said* the airs were Creole melodies, and the words from Withers, or Herrick, or Fletcher, but for which I have since so vainly sought, that I am convinced both poetry and music were her own.

It was a rare indication of the Cecil Danby divining rod, to have discovered such a well-spring of delight as freshened that agreeable autumn! — I did not venture to ask myself whether I deserved it. In the presence of the sisters I thought only of them: devouring every look and every word of Sophronia, as if female words and looks were new to me as to Robinson Crusoe; and when absent, reconsidering them over again, in the hope of developing the nature of their peculiar charm.

But, alas! in so happy a position as I then occupied, one may keep one's secret, but one's secret will not keep itself. While I flattered myself, ostrich that I was! of being invisible because hiding my head, my visits to two mysterious ladies at Sunning Hill had become a standing jest at Windsor Castle; and as standing jests at the Castle very soon take wing, Mrs. Brettingham began to understand the motive of my strict attention to my official duties and the rarity of my visits to town. For when I *did* make my appearance, she received me with demonstrations of delight which ought to have sufficiently betrayed the hollow nature of her regard. Had she loved me, she must have exploded into tears or indignation, whereas she was fuller of blandishments than ever.

On the other hand, the frankness of my new friends had imparted such powers of discernment to my eyes that I saw at once not only the duplicity of Mariana, but the meanness of the husband, who for his wordly advancement's sake, suffered his honour to be thus compromised; nor could I help contrasting the sneakiness of Brettingham, a man commanding universal respect as belonging to the best clubs and giving the best dinners, with all I had heard from Annie and Sophronia of the tenaciousness of West Indian husbands! Mrs. Greysdale, indeed, seemed proud of the jealous temper of her husband, as of a domestic virtue; and had more than once assured me she was satisfied her husband would kill *her* on the spot, had he grounds for suspecting the prudence of her conduct.



"And so would I Sophronia, should I ever enjoy the happiness of being her husband," muttered I in the depths of my heart; for *there* at least I no longer disguised from myself the earnestness of my passion.

After all, of the various modes and tenses of human happiness, give *me* the indicative of *amo*! The attainment of our ambitions is a troubled joy. As in skating, a sprawl on the ice or a plunge into the chilly waters below, may at any moment reverse our position. The pleasures of eating bring the pain of indigestion, — or drinking, head-ache. It is only the delirium tremens of love which surrounds us with an atmosphere of delight, poetizing the prose of life; and, by rendering every breath we draw a sigh of tenderness, investing the meanest of our actions with the fairy tints of romance.

Never had I been fully conscious of this before! Boys are ashamed of owning themselves slaves to the tender passion, even to themselves. In Emily's time, I should have blushed to plead guilty to such an accusation; in Helena's, I treated the matter as a jest. As one advances in life, one grows more sincere with oneself. I did not deceive myself *now*; I saw clearly that the hour of the day spent at Silwood Cottage was fairly worth the remainder of the twenty-four!

But how was all this to end? Though fluttering in the sunshine of prosperity, I had not a guinea I could call my own; nothing to meet the horrible parchment rapacities of a prudent family, — nothing wherewithal to endow a family of my own! Mr. Vavasour was shortly expected home with his son-in-law; and how would he relish the idea of a beggarly Honourable with an income mainly dependent on the caprices of royalty, as the husband of his charming daughter?

I swear, — and though Jove may laugh at lover's perjuries, I have no doubt he looks very grave at perjuries uttered between author and reader, — I SWEAR that such was my sole motive for refraining from a positive declaration of my sentiments to Sophronia Vavasour. I was determined that her father or Greysdale should sanction my pretensions to her hand, ere I attempted to hamper her by an engagement; and however great the difficulty

of controlling my inclinations, used to go and sit by her work-table, morning after morning, or saunter with her up and down the little terrace of the garden, through fog, or frost, or snow, — the happiest of mankind; yet never approach within millions of miles the one short question which was to render such happiness permanent. — So even was the tenor of our days, that the besotted Cecil Danby had not leisure to perceive

How pleasantly and fast the days succeeded,  
With one who felt and thought so much as he did!

He felt satisfied, however, that Sophronia understood his motives and respected them. Clever as she was, all the workings of my mind must be apparent to her, as those of bees in a glass hive. Nay, I sometimes detected on the part of Mrs. Greysdale certain glances of intelligence, when I invited Miss Vavasour to walk or ride, purporting to say, — “Go with him, Soph, — go with him. If not engaged, it is only because Mr. Danby has too much delicacy to entangle you without the sanction of your father.”

One day, as I was bidding them farewell, I thought I saw a look of anxiety in Sophronia’s countenance. I could almost have sworn that tears were gathering in her eyes as I quitted the room.

“If, after all,” mused I, as I proceeded briskly along the road towards Black Ness Gate, “she should *not* feel certain of my affections? If she should think me trifling with her, and resent the reserve of my conduct?”

I had half a mind to ride back and satisfy myself about those moistened eyes. But I thought better of it, as one says when one thinks worldly-wise. The weather was unpropitious. Besides, I was afraid the servants might smile or look wise on seeing me return. I was afraid Mrs. Greysdale would elevate her eyebrows, and, perhaps, utter some expressive interjection. I was afraid, in short, of being laughed at; and so, went my way, leaving Sophronia to weep if she thought proper.

I was resolved, however, that another day should not elapse without bringing us to an understanding.

On reaching the Castle, I found an express awaiting

me; — not a royal one, — a letter from my brother! — “Lady Ormington had undergone an attack of brain-fever, and was not expected to live out the night.” It was necessary I should jump into my chaise and hasten to town. I was conscious of having been already too remiss in my attentions to my mother.

It was December. The weather was bitter and boisterous. The rain rattled against the carriage windows, as I proceeded, at first through dusk and soon through utter darkness, along the London road. On Staines bridge, I remember the gusts of wind met us so sharply, that I felt as if we might be blown over the parapet, into the freezing waters; and never shall I forget the shrill shrieking of the blast over the dreary expanse of Hounslow Heath. It was a real comfort to reach the suburbs, and hail the cheering lamps and bustle of the approach to town.

My mind misgave me that I should arrive too late; or rather, heaven forgive me, I almost wished it might be so. There was nothing in my poor mother’s character or disposition to reconcile me to the idea of her death-bed. I *trusted* it might have been brief and peaceful; but I almost shuddered while I trusted. The dread of finding Lady Harriet canting by her fireside had long estranged me from my mother’s sick room. I scarcely knew whom I might find there now!

The first person I saw in the hall in Hanover Square was Coulson, still “Lord Ormington’s own man,” though grayer and more infirm than my lord. But Coulson was privileged by length of service to be as gouty and useless as he pleased; and as he stood there at the foot of the stairs, while I was hurrying up the door-steps, I thought I could discover by a sort of triumphant twinklè in his eye that all was over; that my lady, — that is, that my lord, was “released.”

I was mistaken. My brother, on hearing the carriage stop, came down to meet me. Lady Ormington was not only alive, but the physician had warned him that the agonies of death might be painfully prolonged. I saw that Danby was paler than usual, — deathly pale. — His sympathies were evidently deeply enlisted in the sad scene he was compelled to witness.

"I—I almost regret having summoned you to take your share in these melancholy duties, Cecil!" said he, in the kind and most brotherly tone with which he always addressed me on grave occasions. "But I felt that I might reproach myself hereafter for not affording you occasion for a farewell word—nay, that perhaps *you* might reproach me. Such, however, is just now the state of my poor mother's mind, that I almost wish for your own sake you would refrain from entering the room."

One never likes to own oneself a coward. I begged him therefore to believe that scenes of such a nature had no terrors for me; and that I held it as much my duty as his own, to minister to the death-bed of Lady Ormington.

Danby made no answer; but quitted the room with an air of mournful gravity, that invited me to follow. Lady Ormington's sitting room was, as I have before mentioned, the back drawing room, her bed room the third, which was fitted up, in the French fashion, with an alcove and sofa bed.

On entering the sitting room, a powerful smell of ether was perceptible. I thought it had been used for the dying woman. I found afterwards that my brother, in the anguish of his soul, had been compelled to have recourse to such a restorative.

So frivolous is human nature in its state of civilization, that there is something grating to the feelings in the trifling disarrangements peculiar to the recklessness of a house among whose inmates death is busy. The King of Terrors, so little a respecter of persons, is no respecter of things. Of the house he enters, he leaves open the door, and a thousand disorders follow in his train.

My mother, like all sedentary persons, was peculiarly susceptible about the exactitude of her domestic arrangements. Chairs and tables had their appointed order; and to derange a console or a book, was high treason.

Now, all was flung about without care or ceremony! The dying woman had been cupped an hour before; and the objects connected with the operation were still lying on her satin chairs and japan tables.—Glasses, vials, towels, were scattered around in confusion; and the lady's

maid, haggard, slipshod, and untidy, was rushing about in bewildered distress.

The door stood open of the bedchamber, which was still more imperfectly lighted than the sitting room; and already, moanings and mutterings were audible, which I rightly conjectured to proceed from the sufferer.

"I was not aware that my poor mother was sensible?" said I, addressing my brother. But Danby made no reply: he only looked paler and graver than before.

I entered the sick room, without noticing that in a chair close beside the door, rigid and motionless, sat Lord Ormington, as if spell-struck and unable to tear himself away; and proceeded straight to the couch, on which, under a slight coverlet, lay the wasted form of Lady Ormington. They had placed an air cushion covered with dark silk, belonging to her easy chair, under her head, by way of affording her cooler support; which served only to throw out into more terrible relief the whiteness of her ghastly features, and scattered grey hairs.

For there was no deception now, — no silk curls, — no becoming cap! All had been removed by order of her medical attendants: and, as if in bitter contrast with the coquetry of adornment to which to the last she had been so fondly wedded, her white hairs streamed over the black pillow; combining with her closed eyes and blue lips, and, above all, the ensanguined linen stanching the blood round her neck, to augment the horror of the scene.

I advanced to take her hand; and the white bony fingers clutched to mine with the convulsive snatch of the dying.

But this was not the worst. As soon as the emotions which had overcome me on entering subsided sufficiently to admit of my seeing and hearing distinctly, I perceived that the moaning sound which had struck me on my arrival, conveyed the wanderings of delirium.

The woman, about to appear at the judgment seat of God, was back in her guilty past, — young, lovely, vain, — fluttering at Ranelagh, — parading at court. — The grey-headed, withered, dying woman was again the wan-ton beauty!

"Sir Lionel!" she muttered — come hither Sir Lionel! — Beware of that fellow Coulson. — He has his eye upon us. — He is in Lord Ormington's confidence. — To-night, at the Pantheon, you shall know more. — The Queen received me coldly yesterday, dear Lionel, — I am afraid people are beginning to talk."

These words, though incoherently uttered, — interrupted by the gasps of failing life, and breathed through the foam that gathers on the lip of the dying, — were sufficiently audible to bring a burning flush to my cheek.

"Ay, ay!" gasped the sufferer, after a long interval of exhaustion, — "it is all up with him, — it is all up with him! — I knew it would end so, — those fatal Argyle Rooms! — Hazard — always hazard! — at any time he would have sacrificed me to the dice-box. — Arrested? — In the King's Bench? — And he still expects me, *me* to go and visit him in the King's Bench! — Disguise myself! ha, ha, ha! — a pretty risk, — with Coulson always on the watch. Take Cecil, too? — no, no! — As if he cared about the boy! — He cares for nothing but himself and the Duthé — opera-dancers and hazard — and — hazard — hazard — hazard! — Lord Ormington was right. *He* may forgive me — but I shall never forgive myself. Minuets? ha, ha, ha! — They have not had a minuet before at Almack's these forty years!"

Then followed those hideous gasps, that rattling in the throat, announcing that these fatal revelations were wrung from her soul by the stifling hand of death; — that her secrets escaped her heart only because her heart was "fracted and corroborate."

I now first perceived, by the deprecating glance of Danby from the bed towards the door, that Lord Ormington was present. Involuntarily, my own eyes took the same direction. Impossible to surmise whether he heard all *we* were hearing! — His eyes were fixed upon the floor. Only the summit of his bald head was perceptible.

"If we could persuade him to leave the room," — Danby was beginning in one of his calm low whispers. But at that moment, the broken ejaculations of the dying woman recommenced.

"The child, — hurt the child? — injure the child? — not he! Lord Ormington is a merciful man — ha, ha, ha! —

very merciful. He promised if I would give up Pharaoh and Macao, and never see Lionel again, for the sake of his children, he would not expose me. — Ha ! ha ! ha ! *For the sake of his children ?* for the sake of his *purse* ! — Wasn't it, Lionel ? — Ha ! ha ! ha ! — He had not generosity enough to feel my offences as they ought to have been felt, — for if he had, I should never have offended. — Such a marriage ! — But my mother told me I *could* not refuse ! — family diamonds — family points — Miss Richardson, take away the handkerchief from Bihiche's glass case. I can bear to look at her now. Cecil ! don't laugh at me — ungrateful fellow ! — ever since you were born, you have done nothing but laugh at your mother. — And Danby, — asking me to see a clergyman, — ha ! ha ! ha ! as if I had not seen clergymen enough, years ago, at our public days at Ormington Hall !”

Presently, there followed more terrible exclamations. — As the night advanced, Danby succeeded in persuading his father to retire to rest. We stationed the apothecary and waiting woman in the adjoining sitting room, on pretence that her ladyship might be able to sleep ; but in reality, because we were so far brothers as to feel in common that the terrible lesson imparted by such a scene was for no ears but our own.

For, as the fever abated and depression ensued, came moments of terror and despair almost too terrible. Her mind was still wandering ; for she fancied herself standing in the body on the edge of the dread abyss which morally she was approaching. — Icy hands seemed to drag her down to the grave with their iron grasp. Her struggles were frightful. All the night long, stood Danby by her pillow ; pale as death, but strong and courageous, whispering soothing words whenever there was a chance of their becoming audible, — wiping the dews from her disfigured brow, — the foam from her lips, — and repressing the struggles of her agony.

A dim winter morning dawned at length ; not upon that muffled chamber whence every ray but that of the watchlight was excluded, — but into the adjoining room, of which in their confusion they had forgotten to close the shutters ; — and the scene of piteous confusion became still more miserably manifest. — All I feared was, that the

light might rouse the man and woman who had luckily dropped off to sleep; — for to poor Lady Ormington's distraction had succeeded a calm, still more appalling, during which, in a hoarse, steady voice, she proclaimed as truths all we might have surmised to be the result of frenzy. Terrible was her despair, — terrible the throes of such a death-bed!

I have deliberated within myself whether I should advert to this, or whether the secrets of such a chamber ought not to be sacred. But having once made up my mind to read the world a lesson at my own expense, and the expense of all belonging to me, I will not tear away a page that addresses itself especially to those triflers of the day, who, absorbed by their Sir Lionels and their Bihiches, forget they will leave sons to tremble beside their couch while closing the staring eyes and smoothing the dishevelled white hairs, disordered by a repentant death-bed.

The most afflicting part of all I had to suffer, was my position with regard to Danby.

When I met him again, after a few hours' rest, I flung myself, for the first time, into his arms. For the first time, I seemed to feel that he was all the relative I had on earth. For Julia, who was absent with her husband in Ireland, where Herries had just received a high appointment, had been always kept so properly in the dark with regard to her mother, that she knew nothing of the peculiarities of my position, and was consequently unaware of my peculiar claims on her sympathy.

With Danby, it was otherwise; and he felt them as so high-souled a man alone can feel.

"I know all you are about to say to me, Cecil," said he, earnestly returning my embrace, but silencing the determination I was beginning to express, to abstain for the future from all participation in Lord Ormington's fortune; "and I appreciate your sense of equity. But reflect that the resolution you announce would be fatal to the family honour, which Lord Ormington has made so many sacrifices to preserve untarnished. If, five-and-thirty years after the occurrence of an event, of which he then overlooked the bitterness of the injury, and passed over in silence for the sake of his legitimate children, he should



be dragged forth for public reprobation by the waywardness of one who had no share in the fault, and to whom the frailty of his mother should be sacred, how poor would be the consolation to your pride! — For it is your pride only, my dearest Cecil, that suffers. You cannot bear the consciousness of pecuniary obligation to Lord Ormington! — Poor man! — do you suppose that the abstraction of a few thousand pounds from his property is the worst penalty he has had to undergo? — Do you think it nothing to afford the shelter of his roof, — the decency of his name, to the woman who had so cruelly wronged him? — Do not add to his amount of injuries, Cecil, by frustrating his wishes!"

"It is not alone Lord Ormington whom I am injuring by accepting a portion in his family to which I am unentitled," said I, sullenly, "Julia and yourself are the sufferers by ——"

"You are our brother!" replied Danby. "Upon us at least your claims are sacred. From the moment the family estates become my own, you inherit them from me, — as children of —— but why waste sophistry upon that concerning which it is so impossible to argue, and so easy to feel!" cried Danby. "If you love me, Cecil, (and I am convinced you do, — it is my comfort to *believe* that you do!) you will let all proceed as it has ever done; — you will conduct yourself towards Lord Ormington as *I* do, — you will obliterate as much as possible from your mind all we have been compelled to witness; and neither dishonour the dead nor grieve the living, by resenting what it does not belong to you, my dear brother, to pass in judgment."

Still, though solaced by his arguments, I could not refrain from bitter allusions to the hardness of my destinies.

"We do not choose our fortunes!" was Danby's mild reply. "As far as I have seen of human life, the compensations of Providence are so nicely balanced, that, even in *this* world, a more equal measure of good and evil is bestowed than we care to admit. I have had my afflictions, Cecil. I have laid in the grave a wife and child, such as it is a severe trial to survive. Even the joy of possessing such a treasure as I have in Jane — but we will not discuss this further!" said he, on perceiving that his

allusion to poor little Arthur had driven every tinge of colour from my cheek. — “I ask it of your friendship, Cecil, which is very dear to me ; I ask it of your discretion, as fated (whatever rash struggles your unavailing generosity may attempt), to succeed me in my family honours, to conduct yourself in this emergency with the same deference to the interests of our name and the opinion of the world, which has marked the forbearing conduct of Lord Ormington.”

I obeyed, — I will not say complied ; — for I felt that Danby was entitled to give the law to me.

According to the absurd exigencies of aristocratic life, therefore, Lady Ormington’s crimson velvet and gilded cherubim, after being watched over with all the pomps of undertakerhood, were conveyed by an inconvenient journey to a remote family seat, to be laid among the remains of the family on which she had bestowed an unlawful heir ; nay, as if to complete the mockery of this world-serving ceremonial, “Lord Ormington and his two afflicted sons met the body at Ormington Hall, and officiated as chief mourners at the affecting ceremony.”

So said the county paper ; following up the announcement by a description of the doles distributed to the poor, the hanging of the church with black, the muffled bells, the funeral sermon ! — While all the time of that consignment of the sinner to her grave, the hearts of her sons were stricken with terror as they stood by her coffin to listen to the words of the burial service — “I know that my Redeemer liveth ; and that, though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God !”

The night before the funeral train quitted London, — having complied with Danby’s request that I would remain with him and Lord Ormington in Hanover Square to set off with them on their melancholy duty, — restless and irritable, I found myself unable to resist my inclination to enter once more the chamber of death.

I knew that all had been disposed for the departure of the body at daybreak ; and concluded that the coffin, thus closed, was left there to the stillness and darkness of the night. The ceremonial of such occasions was new to me ; and I started back with horror on perceiving the mass of back plumes upon the coffin lid, — the flowing pall, —

hassocks placed around for the farewell prayers of the afflicted family:—but far more, on perceiving that a solitary mourner was *really* praying beside the dead!

It was Lord Ormington!—so absorbed by the thoughts that bowed down his grey head upon the pall of her whom as the bride of his youth he had loved so fondly, and for whom, as the curse of his age, he had made such mighty sacrifices, that he did not perceive my entrance into the room.

I stood there for a moment in silence, contemplating the scene.

The chamber in which Lady Ormington had breathed her last was the boudoir where, in my infancy, I had seen her absorbed, heart, soul and body, by the frivolities of life;—where I had traced the flowers of the Axminster carpet while listening to the rustling of her brocade. And now, her corpse was lying in the chamber, into which, a hundred times, I had seen her emerge, radiant, perfumed, fluttering with vanity and the last new fashion, to welcome Sir Lionel Dashwood!—*There* stood the sofa on which they used to sit together,

Smiling as if earth contained no tomb;

reckless of the condemnations of either this world or the next!—And *there* stood her coffin on its trestles—the husband she had dishonoured kneeling beside it—and the son whose existence she had embittered scarcely refraining from words of execration as he gazed!

Appalling *résumé* of the life of a woman of Fashion!

Mihi frigidus horror

Membra quatit, gelidusque coit formidine sanguis!

## CHAPTER V.

La vie ne se révèle à nous-mêmes qu'avec le choc des occasions.

BRUCKER.

Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.—SENEC.

I SCARCELY know how to account for it: but the nature of the scenes I had been witnessing inspired me with an insuperable objection to return to my service at Windsor,

or my pleasures at Sunning Hill. — It was not that my views towards Sophronia Vavasour were in the smallest degree influenced by so cruel an exposition of the chances of matrimonial life. But my self-love had been so severely wounded, that I felt myself too much degraded in my own estimation to appear immediately in presence of one before whom it was my ambition to shine in the brightest colours.

I resolved, therefore, to absent myself for a time. The King, with his usual good-natured consideration, gave me a lengthened leave of absence; and at Danby's suggestion, I resolved to spend a few weeks in Paris.

"A total change of scene and companionship will afford a new colouring to your ideas," said he. "But for the claims of my father and daughter, I could fain bear you company. Weighty duties, however, await me here. A stirring moment is at hand, Cecil. — Our friend Dawson's speech last August, which so excited the rage and amazement of my brother-in-law, was a more important indication than Herries then inferred. I flatter myself my personal influence has been instrumental, and will become still further instrumental, in accomplishing a measure without which the age we live in must fail to establish its claims with posterity to the title of enlightened."

Such was the first hint I received of the important measure about to paralyze the wisdom of Parliament, — the Catholic relief bill; — a measure received with rough music by the rabid rage of Protestant intolerance; and branding even the sacred Gog and Magog of Toryism, Wellington and Peel, with the infamy of having grown in wisdom as they grew in years, and swallowing with a good grace the salutary dose about to be inflicted as a drench.

*Malum consilium est, quod mutari non potest;*

but though satisfied of the wisdom of the recantation of the Tories, I was not sorry to avoid hearing the matter battled over at Windsor, next to Oxford the stiffest stronghold of High Churchism. Arguments against an inevitable measure are to me as insupportable as the whistling of an easterly wind; and when, some weeks afterwards

in Paris, I improved my mind with the reported speech of plausible Sadler, the fiddle-faddler, the man in armour set up by the Newcastle interest to do battle for the great tithe-cause, it afforded me a relief almost as great as that conceded to the Catholics, to have escaped hearing its clauses subdivided into slips, and distributed at dessert at all the dinner tables of the season like the mottoes of French sugar-plums.

Let it not be imagined, ad interim, by my gentler readers, that I had courage to tear myself from England, without having fully ascertained that all was well at Silwood. But Greysdale and his father-in-law were not expected to arrive in England before the end of March; — and, remote from the influence of Sophronia's eyes, and viewing the question dispassionately, I was now more than ever of opinion that it was indispensable to submit my pretensions, in the first instance, to the paternal wisdom of Mr. Vavasour.

I had chosen Paris as the object of my excursion, simply because suggested by my brother, — for I was in the humour to be impelled hither or thither by any one who felt interest enough in me to direct my movements. — But once fairly off, I would have given worlds to return; and on reaching Paris, the noise and bustle of the place so disgusted me, that it needed all my self-command not to order post-horses the following morning.

Instead of the six weeks premeditated, I was resolved that *one* should suffice to execute certain commissions I had undertaken; and that, without fear of the imputation of inconsistency before my eyes, I would make my way back again on some decent pretext of business. All my journey long, I had thought of nothing but Sophronia; and now, the unhomeishness of an hotel garni made me sigh for the snuggerly at Silwood. — I wanted those grey eyes to cheer me; I wanted that melodious voice to persuade me into charity with the world.

At the close of a couple of days, new regrets brought her more forcibly than ever to my mind. The weather was just that soft sunshiny, deceptive season, which, at the commencement of February, in Paris, often deludes one into a belief that the year has suddenly stepped for-

ward into May, —passing over the two bleak intervening months; and after a brilliant morning on the Boulevarts and afternoon in the gardens of the Tuileries, I felt so revived, that I could not forbear regretting I had not reserved my trip to Paris for my honey-moon expedition, so as to enable me to enjoy those pleasant sounds and sights with a companion impressionable as my Sophronia. But in a career like mine, to-day and to-morrow are apt to gain the ascendancy over yesterday.

Having known Sir Charles Stuart in Portugal, — I could do no less than present myself at the Embassy; and who has not felt, at some moment or other, the charm of renewing old associations by the “do you remember the day that,” — or “were there ever such pleasant people as those so and sos!” — Sir Charles was a man to render such reminiscences sufficiently exciting: — and I found the house and its society altogether so attractive, that, at the end of the week, I had of course forgotten my precipitate project of return.

Fourteen years had elapsed since my last visit to the città ridente; and the changes effected in the interim, if not striking were amusing. Stone and mortar had done little. Very few public improvements: — only an expiatory chapel or two bearing inscriptions in perpetual commemoration of Talleyrand's apophthegm, that “*les Bourbons n'avaient rien appris, ni rien oublié.*” All that activity of monumental creation which Napoleon had promoted as a gag to the murmurs of the most vain-glorious people on the face of the earth, when tempted to grumble at the cost of his imperial game of war, had ceased; and Paris, under Louis XVIII. had betaken itself with dutiful loyalty to a gouty chair.

But if the influence of an ancient dynasty were perceptible in the retrogression of public improvement, it was much more so in the advance of public demoralization. But that grace and wit were wanting, things were almost as bad as in the time of the Régence or Louis XV.; though so incongruously organized, that a more profound thinker than myself might have moralized twenty volumes upon their strangeness.

Louis XVIII., to whom I suppose his confessor tendered

*in extremis* the same confessorial consolation offered by the Abbé Edgworth to his unfortunate predecessor Louis XVI. "Fils de St. Louis! montez au ciel!" must have found himself somewhat encumbered by flesh and the frailties that flesh is heir to, for such an ascent. A voluptuary without grace or spirit, there had been in his time a *maitresse en titre*, a right royally royal *cuisine*, and all the regal indulgences that tend to add a hair shirt to the other pontifical garments of the officiating Archbishop of Paris.

In *his* time, the robes of royalty were of the easiest shaping; and a general laxity followed of course the example of the court, till unhappy parallels came to be instituted between the Duchesse de Berri of our own age, and the Duchesse de Berri of a century before.

On the accession of the reigning King, a man under the dominion of priests and gamekeepers, it was not so easy a matter to tear down at a moment's notice the festoons of roses with which society had been adorned under his predecessor. It was like the imperfect conversion of the N of Napoleon into the L of Louis, on the façade of the Louvre. Faithful to the memory of an early love, the King, in order to *secure* his fidelity, receded as much as possible from the temptations of the world; and it was consequently easy to incur for a short time, in his presence, the mask of hypocrisy with which courtiership saw fit to conceal its joyous visage.

But though Charles X. was virtuous, there were plenty of cakes and ale. My lord Duke dined *au maigre*, on entiles and *morue à la Béchamel* with the King; and supped on foie gras, pâté de Perigord, and white hermitage with the lady of his thoughts. The petticoats of the opera dancers were lengthened by command of the *menus plaisirs*; and Seminaries arose, both in Paris and the suburbs, which caused as loud an uproar against the Jesuits as now against the fortifications; though the time never came for either Jesuits or Artillery to take up their position.

But the consequences of the restraint which the society of the *petit Château* imposed upon itself to conciliate the King, were *bien autre chose!* Most people have read those curious memoirs of Dangeau, written as if expressly

to exemplify the littleness of the illustrious. — Now the reign of Charles X., with its stern Dauphiness and skittish Madame resembled *comme deux gouttes d'eau*, the declining years of Louis XIV. with its solemn Madame de Maintenon and brilliant Duchesse de Bourgogne: — the same intolerance, the same levity! Madame de Stael (not the Baroness) when she describes herself in her convent putting ink into the font of holy water, so that, when the nuns crossed themselves on the forehead at midnight, they might arrive in the chapel hideous as so many demons, never played wilder pranks than the belle Princesse of the Pavillon de Marsan; — and the King's Majesty, absorbed by prayers and parties de chasse, had little leisure to read lectures for her emendation.

From all this, arose an order of society "pleasant but wrong;" — *very* pleasant, I am certain, *very* wrong, I am afraid; — fifty times worse at all events than when, peccadillos being courtly virtues, they were kept within moderate dimensions to be entitled to appear openly *en manteau de cour*.

The morality of either court or city, however, was no affair of mine. I was not the royal confessor, or Archbishop of Paris. All I saw in the *coterie du petit chateau* was a group of pretty, witty, gracious, graceful women, whose Cavaliers exhibited a happy admixture of the manly habits of Englishmen and the polished manners of Frenchmen; addicted to hunting and shooting, whist and the Italian opera, — steeple chases and bals de l'opéra; and after a brilliant soirée or two spent in their society, I no longer wondered at the multitudes of my fair countrywomen and dark countrymen, who annually mark their preference for the sparkling coteries of Paris, over the heavy machinery of the social system of Great Britain.

French politics, on the other hand, are matters of too effervescent nature for a man of my indolent habits to uncork. If the wisdom of our English parliament be inscrutable to the blindness of puppy eyes, heaven knows the turbulence of the French Chamber is fifty-fold more puzzling.

Like Charles X., therefore, who, the more uproarious the liberal party and the more critical the session, only



redoubled the number of his *battues*, making war upon the boar and roebuck, while his ministry made war upon the press, I prefer dwelling upon the pastimes of Paris to its political struggles.

Let me not be thought so ungracious as to have omitted to inquire, on my arrival, after the health of the misunderstood angel in the Rue du Montblanc, whom *I* was supposed to have comprehended. A day or two after reaching Paris, I proceeded to leave cards for Monsieur le Comte and Madame la Comtesse Anacharsis de la Vrillière; when, by the peculiar smile of the concierge, I saw that I was committing some species of blunder; and it is no joke to blunder in a city, where it is proverbially said of blunders — *C'est pire qu'un vice, pire qu'un crime — c'est un ridicule!*

"*Il paraît que je me trompe, mon cher?*" said I, addressing the man with the familiarity which does not authorize a Parisian menial to be familiar in return.

"*Monsieur est étranger!*" he replied, shrugging his shoulders, as if the word foreigner were an excuse and apology for any amount of stupidity. "If Monsieur were not *étranger*, he could scarcely be ignorant that Monsieur le Comte de la Vrillière, who once resided in this Hotel, is now called Monsieur le Comte de St. Gratien, from the fine estate he purchased in Normandy twelve years ago."

"The Comte de St. Gratien? — Not the present *Ministre de l'instruction publique?*" cried I, — recalling to mind how little the line of policy or politics I had heard attributed to that essentially Bourbonian statesman, were in accordance with the tenets of an old Napoleonic *Conseiller d'état*.

"Even so, Monsieur!" replied the concierge, — holding his head a little higher at the association of so dignified a public functionary with his porter's lodge, even retrospectively. — "If Monsieur designs the honour of a visit to Monsieur le Comte or Madame la Comtesse, he will find them at their official residence in the Rue de Grenelle St. Germain."

I immediately resolved to accomplish such a design on the morrow. But I had not to wait so long for the renewal of the acquaintance. Having been charged by

George IV. with private letters to the King which an audience had already enabled me to deliver, on that day, in honour of so august an introduction, I was to dine at the Tuileries.

My mind misgave me, as I proceeded up that self-same stair-case where the limbs of the unfortunate Louis XVI. and his Queen so often dragged themselves while prisoners of state in their own palace, — my mind misgave me, I say, that the royal cook might have been changed on the accession of Charles X. as well as the royal confessor and physician. — *Du tout !* — His Majesty had more faith in the orthodoxy of his royal predecessor's faith as a gastronome, than as a Christian ; and the eating and drinking of the Tuileries were consequently as laudable as ever.

I have often thought, — (ye readers who eat to live instead of wisely living to eat, pardon the digression !) — that the popular fable of the *marmite perpétuelle* which has been stewing away for three centuries in some popular gargote of the quartier des Innocens, ought to be nationally realized by the endowment of a royal *cuisine à perpétuité* for national enlightenment ; unsusceptible of revolutionary changes, unattackable by infernal machines. It is awful to consider the influence exercised by the governmental vicissitudes of the last half century on the gastronomy of France ! — Other sciences have advanced ; for they had their Observatory, — their Jardin des Plantes, — their Ecole de Médecine ; — and whether of royal or national designation, the same cases of beetles, the same dissecting rooms, assisted the progress of natural history and physiology, — the same old telescopes and orreries tended to the discovery of new planetary systems. — Even during the Reign of Terror, *Martin Pours montait à l'arbre* ; and the Board of Longitude pursued its sapient observations on moonshine, in the official star-gazery at the Barrière d'Enfer.

But what is to be expected by the stomach of *la grande nation* so long as the traditions of its *cuisine* share the fluctuating fortunes dependent upon the foolishness of its anointed Sovereigns ? — Napoleon, a great man in his way, bolted his food like an American, and knew not roast from boiled. — Robespierre and Marat probably eat

cutlets of *enfant Normand en papillotte*, or slices of raw young lady, *en vinaigrette*. — Even Louis XVI. fed coarsely; and from the days of Vatal to our own, nothing can have been more uncertain in France than the fortunes of cookery. — The edge of the sword and the guillotine have superseded the prosperity of the carving-knife.

Let some enlightened legislator, therefore, intent upon restoring to *la belle France* her ascendancy over the appetites of Europe, establish and endow a college for the cultivation of gastronomy in all its branches; — with professorial chairs of chemistry and anatomy, and every other science connected with the interests of degustation; so that the nation whose dinners and people were formerly considered the best dressed in the universe, may once more toss up an omelet against the world.

The political results of such a measure are scarcely to be comprehended at a glance. — Time was, that not a Sovereign in Europe but entertained a Frenchman in his kitchen; and we all know that the *cuisine* of a Sovereign is the nearest approach to his heart. — England, Russia, Spain, — however they might abhor the plumage of the Gallic eagle or Gallic cock, — ate unflinchingly of the Gallic *dinde truffée*; and while barbarous Russ, or crack-jaw German, — Spanish or Portuguese, issued from the state paper offices of Petersburg, Vienna, Madrid or Lisbon, French alone was admitted into that only infallible state paper, — the royal menu of those *cuisinier impérial*-ridden capitals!

It is not so now. — The Sovereigns of Portugal have returned to their garlic, and Schönbrunn to its wallowing in sauerkraut, solely because the interests of the solemn science have been destroyed by political vicissitudes; till the classical school of Parisian cookery has become as degenerate as Shakspeare *réchauffé* by David Garrick.

To return however to the last days of Pompeii — the dinner table of Charles X.

Right opposite to me at table sat a heavy man, whose eyes were like those of a parboiled fish, whose face seemed moulded in putty, so ponderously steadfast were its muscles, and who emulated in proportions the model of the Elephant of the Bastille; — yet in whose person I seemed to discern

features of a former acquaintance. — I was not mistaken. This very heavy man was Monsieur le Comte de St. Gratien, — *Ministre de l'Instruction Publique*.

And Madame! — I was beginning to be as full of curiosity as the fumet of the purée giboyée I was eating, would permit. — How much less understood than ever must she be! — How cruelly out of place the leaden placeman before me, at the feet of that ethereal being, — that more impassioned Julie — that more spiritualized Delphine! — And lo! I murmured between my teeth and my fleur-de-lysed soup spoon, “*O ma chère Thérèse!*” with an accent that Mademoiselle Duchesnois must have imitated in the “*O mon cher Curiace!*” of her Horaces.

## CHAPTER VI.

Avec le bec de l'oiseau de proie, l'œil clair et froid, la parole douce, elle est polie comme l'acier d'un mécanique. Elle émeut tout, — moins le cœur. — BALZAC.

Hæc tùm multiplici populus ærmone gaudens. — ÆNEID.

AMID the glare of that brilliant banquet, I was seated beside the Austrian Ambassadors, then young and fair, as now gracious and agreeable; and next her, sat the English Ambassador — neither young nor fair, but as agreeable as herself. — It struck me, however, that he was less fluent than usual; and I soon discovered the cause, in a sort of nasal chaunt proceeding from his neighbour on the other side; of whom all I could see was a portentously stern, stiff, dark-green bérêt; — and all I could hear, a jargon of mingled pedantry and devotion, like all Geneva, — (I mean the puritanical city, not the spirit of that name,) — corked up and iced for use.

Gods! how the woman did prose! — It must go against the grain of a Frenchwoman to prose, — so fluently easy is their natural elocution. — But this one, prosed as if prosing for the whole nation. — And so she was! — for it was no other than the wife of *Monsieur le Ministre de l'Instruction Publique!* — “*Oh! ma chère Thérèse!*”

Well! if I had been gifted with common sense, it was

no more than I might have expected. The coquette of five-and-twenty was, at forty, a *savante* and a prude. She, who had talked buttercups to me in our drives in the Bois de Boulogne, till I grew as de-pastoralized as a lord mayor, — and who had minced metaphysics small enough for the swallow of a canary bird, till I became as material and matter-of-fact as Grimod de la Reynière, — now talked precisely in the style of the *premier Paris*, or great letters of a Ministerial Journal ! — She had the interior of Africa as completely at her finger tips as the Missionary Society ; and was in correspondence with a tribe of Japanese Numbo Jumbos about the Tâtar origin of the Loo Tchoo language.

It answered ! — “ *La femme d’un homme politique,*” says a clever writer of the day, “ *est une machine à gouvernement, un mécanisme à beaux compliments, à révérences ; c’est le premier, le plus fidèle des instrumens dont se sert un ambitieux.*” — Madame de St. Gratien was a leading article with the Dauphine, and a luminary of the court of Charles X. It was even whispered that her influence had assigned to the weighty Anacharsis his present eminent position. Thérèse was no longer *incomprise*. She was understood from the Indus to the Pole — nay, I believe, she talked all the dialects of the intervening lands. — She was said to write pamphlets for the Ministry, — those bits of scribbled paper without which the kite of an administration cannot steady itself, or rise high enough for popular applause ; and with such a head, and such a bérêt to cover it, I no longer wondered at her having silenced the pleasant chat of my friend Sir Charles !

I flattered myself meanwhile that the Administratrix of Public Education would have been as glad to drop the acquaintance of Cis. Danby, as he, hers. And so perhaps she would. But the Honourable Cecil was now a man whom the King of England delighted to honour, and consequently highly deserving the notice of the obedient humble servants of the King of France.

Immediately after dinner, therefore, from which it is customary in France to emerge in couples, like the Noah family entering the ark, or the *dramatis personæ* arranged on the stage at the close of a comedy, — Madame la

Comtesse de St. Gratien dropped the arm of her cavalier, the General in waiting, as starch, stiff, and well matched with her as the twin towers of Notre Dame, and advanced towards me with a speech of recognition, hard, well composed, and lengthy as one of the tirades of Corneille. — Poor Monsieur de St. Gratien! — As Xenarchus hath it, *ὅτ' οἱ τῆς οὐκ ἀδαιμονίας, ἀν' ταῖς γυναιξὶν οὐδ' ὅτι οὐ φῶς* *οἶ* —

All this was a sad bore — but I bore it as heroically as she inflicted it heroically. — She next carried me off in a corner, as a kitten is carried off in the mouth of an old cat; and began congratulating me upon my success in public life, as gravely as if I had been achieving European renown, or civilizing wigwams on the Gambia. It was in vain I assured her that my functions were limited to shining forth on galas and levée days — that I was a mere piece of state furniture, without political influence.

She chose to know better, — she chose to see in me that object of odium to the multitude and adoration to the select few, — a favourite; — and forthwith set about proposing to me an interchange of national archives, state papers, duplicates of the royal libraries, and the arts and sciences know what beside.

I had no words to answer her. — I knew not what the deuce she was talking about; and took refuge in the manœuvre I have usually seen Frenchmen adopt towards women who talk about the deuce knows what, — by executing a series of profound bows of acquiescence.

Positively, these Frenchwomen are wonderful creatures! — There are plenty of clever Englishwomen, — but they are to the manner born. The discreet damsels who write about Political Economy have been swaddled in foolscap and dieted from their youth upwards on printer's ink; while the astronomeress of forty was made to play with baby-house orreries at four years old. Miss Burney and Miss Edgeworth were the wise daughters of learned fathers; and the charming Mrs. Norton is the daughter, and grand-daughter, and sister of wits.

But snatch a Frenchwoman from whatever station of life you think proper, — take a *ravaudeuse* from her joint stool or a Duchess from her *tabouret*, and such is their

instinctive tact for *les convenances*, that each will assume the tone and bearing becoming her new station. — What sovereign born, ever queened it better than Josephine? — What pedant born, ever prosed it better than my Thérèse of the boudoir, — my aërial love, — once mystical as a melody of Schubert and vapourish as an Ossianism of Scheffer, — but now, as matter of fact as a problem of Euclid. I own I trembled as I listened. Had Madame Necker risen from the grave with one of her rectangular dissertations à la Père Nicole in her stony mouth, I could not have felt more paralyzed.

Fortunately, the ko-too of life is easier to assume than its softer emotions. Respectful as if in presence of the Schah of Persia, I promised myself “the honour of taking the earliest opportunity to offer my most humble homage to Madame la Comtesse de St. Gratien:” — then, with a bow worthy of a *grand Chambellan*, glided through an open door into the adjoining gallery, where the ladies of Madame were waiting the issue of a colloquy between their royal mistress and the King.

“*Dégèlez moi, par pitié!*” whispered I, to a charming woman, to whom I had been that morning presented by the Duchesse de Raguse. And I forthwith proceeded to do into French for her William Spenser’s graceful poem of “Love and Reason:” describing myself as little Love, (a charming little love of six and thirty!) — shivering under the shadow of the marble figure of *la Raison sévère*, as exemplified in the lady of Monsieur le Ministre de l’Instruction Publique.

“*Ah! cette femme!*” was all I could elicit in reply, from the pretty fluttering creature, who would not trouble herself to bestow more than a shrug of the shoulders and an interjection upon a being so antithetical to herself, that she seemed afraid of disorganizing her mind by allowing it to dwell on such an object.

Nevertheless, I observed that Monsieur le Comte and Madame la Comtesse de St. Gratien, occupied a highly honourable position in those formal salons, — the temperature of which was considerably refrigerated since my last visit. The official couple possessed in a supreme degree the decent gravity of office. Their bow and curt-

sey, — their exits and entrances, — were perfect as if studied under Baptiste and M<sup>lle</sup> Mars. If they had been carved in wood to order, to fill for the satisfaction of the public eye the administration of public instruction, they could not have looked more soberly wise, more severely rational. — What a well assorted couple, — *que de dignité — que de raison ! — Voilà en effet, des gens de bien !* — One was tempted to exclaim when one saw them engaged in sober palaver with Charles X., “qui, ut rationem nullam afferrent, ipsâ auctoritate me frangerent !” Yet *this* was once the *bon vivant Préfet* of the empire ; — and *that*, the languid, fantastical *femme incomprise* !

Madame de la Bélinaye, the graceful woman to whom I had applied for release from my nightmare, was one of those charming creatures one seldom meets out of Paris, content to shine as an exquisite component segment of a circle, without ever seeking to detach herself from the canvas as a prominent feature. — The ambition of a French beauty is to be “*belle parmi les belles*” — of an English beauty, to make other women look ugly. — An English beauty likes to eclipse, and longs to astonish. — Madame de Bélinaye and others of her kind, would have been shocked at the idea of astonishing. A woman *parfaitement comme il faut*, should never appear where she is not too well assorted with the time and place, the season and the scene, to produce or wish to produce so vulgar a sensation.

On making her acquaintance, it never occurred to me to ask myself what might be her age, — what her position in the world. She was so admirably dressed, her gauze turban so light, so fresh, *si bien posé*, — and the ringlets accompanying it were so silken, — her form was so exquisitely moulded, her hand so slender and so well-gloved, that I was too enchanted with *her tournure* as a whole, to analyze its parts. — She was thoroughly “*charmante* !” After all, why should not dress have its charm as well as any other accomplishment ? People fall in love with a woman’s singing or drawing ; — purely artificial acquirements, — addressing themselves to the eye or ear, and not a whit more indicative of refinement of taste than the fastidiousness which produces a chef d’œuvre of *l’art de la toilette* !



It is absurd to underrate an instinct so essential to the garnish of society. Look at the result of such contempt, in those figures of fun which disgrace the public places of England ;—consolidated rainbows,—moving flower gardens,—masses of flowers and feathers, heavy trinkets and dirty finery,—who expend fortunes in haberdasher's shops for the express purpose of making themselves ridiculous.

Madame de la Bélinaye, I am convinced, had never been in a haberdasher's shop in her life !—The few ornaments of her dress were so simple, so subdued, and owed their merit so entirely to their appropriateness to her compact figure and well-turned head, that one could not fancy her otherwise than one saw her at the moment.—Her dress appeared intrinsically a portion of herself.—It was impossible to say, as one often does of English women, “how much better she would have been with,—or without,—so and so !”

It was the same with her conversation. No wonder the fable of the little Princess who dropped pearls and diamonds from her lips, had its origin in France !—Everything that fell from her lips was either sparkling with liveliness, or *bien arrondi*,—*bien perlé*,—by its polite and gracious form.—After talking with her a whole evening, it would have been difficult to recall a single sentence she had uttered. Yet at the time, every phrase seemed so distinct, every sentiment so graceful, that one fancied one must remember them forever.—She was, in short, a creation of four centuries of civilization,—one of those fleet, sleek, slender products of the racing stud of refinement,—the Newmarket founded by Francis I., with a king's plate for elegance of costume, manners, and conversation !

I am almost afraid that the night of my presentation to Madame de la Bélinaye, the face which haunted my sleepless pillow was adorned by an aerial turban, and looked at me through two hazel eyes rather than through the grey orbs of my Sophronia.—But it could not be helped !

My attention, however, was not wholly absorbed by this attractive woman.—There was a great deal to inter-

est one at the Tuileries. — The game of courtiership is always more exciting when there are combinations to be made; and the rival camps of the two daughters-in-law of the King, — the childless Dauphine and the young mother of the heir presumptive was highly diverting. — The severe prudery of the former, the thoughtless Italian gaiety of the latter, produced incessant disgusts, and endless jealousies; not the less irritating for the harness of family affection by which they were yoked together.

I sometimes fancied I could discover in the two royal sisters-in-law, the Elizabeth and Mary of other times. But Madame was wanting in the beauty, and the Dauphiness in the enlightenment, forming the best characteristics of the two queens; though I believe the same motive lay at the bottom of their antipathy: — *i. e.* that the son of the one was to inherit the dominions of the other.

I cannot say that, either as Madame d'Angoulême or Dauphiness, I ever fancied the lady whom Louis XVIII. used to call on state occasions his Antigone. — She appeared to me a hard disagreeable woman; and though willing, in compliance with the exhortations of the Faubourg St. Germain, to “*respecter ses malheurs*,” I never could help feeling that to be so remarkably ugly was the greatest *malheur* of them all. — It is as unpardonable a fault in a woman to be unsightly, as in a queen to have given no heirs to the throne.

That I should espouse the cause of the Princess who had the advantage of numbering Madame de la Bélinaye in her household, was inevitable; — a partizanship soon discovered, — for under such circumstances, the different members of the royal circle were as definitely ranged to a discerning eye, as the different pieces on a chess board: — the two colours, — the two parties, — being utterly distinct, though inextricably mingled together by the chances of the game.

Madame la Comtesse de St. Gratien was of course a rigid Delphinian. — Stiff in the farthingale of prudery as whalebone could make her, Thérèse had no longer a monitor in her heart to bespeak indulgence for the frailties of her sex. — I swear I believe that women, like official men, have the faculty of dismissing everything from their minds which they do not wish to remember; and that she

had really forgotten there was ever a moment when she had fancied the bulbous Préfet a monster and Cecil Danby her better half. — And yet, there is no saying! — It was perhaps because conscious of a vulnerable heel that she had invested herself in such a tremendous pair of jack-boots!

Of all those who bristled up against the pleasures of the little coterie of Madame, she was the fiercest. — Too loyal to conceive a fault in any royally descended personage, Madame de St. Gratien took refuge in pitying the Princess whom she could not presume to blame. — She pitied her for having such bad advisers, — for being surrounded with men without heads and women without hearts; she pitied her for not being amenable to the prayers of the congregation or the good example of her illustrious sister-in-law; — and above all, she pitied her for having such a frivolous woman in her confidence as that Madame de la Bélinaye. And the way in which Thérèse uttered the words “frivolous” and “*that* Madame de la Bélinaye,” — would have been a study for any actress intent upon distinguishing herself in the part of Lady Sneerwell.

One favourite gesture of Thérèse indeed, still lingered with Madame la Comtesse de St. Gratien; — she had possessed a wonderful knack of raising her eyes to heaven, in the paroxysms of morbid sensibility of the *femme incomprise*; and a very slight variation of expression enabled her to turn this to account in the paroxysms of prudery becoming the lady of *l’Instruction Publique*. — It was wonderful how piously she uplifted her eyes, every time she mentioned the name of *that* Madame de la Bélinaye.

One is obliged to sit patient under the weight of many a powerful exhibition of human hypocrisy. But to me, one of the vilest crocodile’s eggs which the corruptions of society have hatched into existence, is the plausibility with which the unconvicted Magdalens of the world shake their heads and point their fingers at those who, “for example sake,” they consider ought to be invested in sackcloth and ashes, or exhibited in a white sheet! — More than once, have I been almost moved to an outburst of bitter irony, by the severe morality poured forth upon me by such women as Madame la Comtesse de St. Gratien.

"If it be an object to you to stand well at the Tuileries," whispered Madame de la Bélinaye — on the other hand, — at a charming soirée the following night at Madame de Rimbault's, reviving all I had fancied of the brighter days of Parisian gaiety and grace, — "do not forget your promise of offering your respects to Madame de St. Gratien. — She is a person whom it is not safe to offend."

"I have no ambition here which she is likely to forward," replied I, gazing upon my fair admonitress with an expression of countenance intending to be as eloquent as Mirabeau.

"If you have any friends then, whom you do not wish to expose to her virulence of tongue," resumed Madame de la Bélinaye, "for *their* sake, be not wanting in the common ceremonies of politeness."

"I will call upon her to-morrow morning," cried I, eagerly accepting what I trusted was a personal allusion.

"Call upon her to-morrow morning?" — ejaculated Madame de la Bélinaye, — with one of those expressive gestures by which French women concentrate volumes into an élévation of the eyebrow or movement of the hand. — "*Sidonie, ma belle!*" — said she, turning towards a pretty Russian who sat beside her — "*Monsieur Danby est il impayable!*" — He talks of paying a morning visit to Madame de St. Gratien!"

"If she could only hear that any living man contemplated so terrible a breach of decorum!" cried her friend. "But Monsieur Danby is excusable. He is a foreigner. Everything is permitted to foreigners. *He* cannot be expected to be aware of the strictness of etiquette that prevails in the Hotel of the *Ministre de l'Instruction Publique.*"

"You are to know," resumed Madame de la Bélinaye, "that Madame de St Gratien, who is honoured with the friendship and esteem of the Dauphiness, is one of the most exemplary women of the day. — She goes to confession every third day; and would not touch the claw of a shrimp on Fridays. — Nothing is too rigid for her. — Her life is a series of macerations. — I know not whether it be by way of penance, but she would not receive a morning visit from one of your abandoned sex, to conquer an Em-

pire. — If you wish to pay your respects, it must be at her official *soirée*. Monday nights are appointed for the receptions of *Monsieur le Ministre de l'Instruction Publique*; and you cannot do better than go and kiss the footstool of the throne of our Aspasia."

"I cannot do better than obey any commands with which you are pleased to honour me," said I.

And I could all the better endure the prospect of this solemn visitation, because I was engaged to a ball on the following Monday at the Austrian Embassy, which would take the taste of the bitter pill out of my mouth.

I detest all parties where men predominate. — Shrubberies are invariably the better for the introduction of a few roses and lilies amid their solemn verdure; and the better qualities of manly nature are not called into play, when there are no petticoats in the case.

It was from a little family party at the Duchesse de Dijon's, the mother of Madame de la Bélinaye, a circle exhibiting all the *agrémens* derivable from a group of lovely women, beheld in the easy negligence of domestic life, that I proceeded to the awful Hotel of the *Ministre de l'Instruction Publique*, in whose court-yard a variety of official equipages were drawn up; while, outside the *porte cochère*, waited a long string of citadines and cabriolets, which I conjectured to belong to the Savans, forming the pit and gallery of the auditory.

Two *huissiers de service* wearing silver chains over their customary suits of solemn black, ushered me through two chambers exceedingly hot and stuffy, crowded with the worst looking and worst smelling men with whom it was ever my fortune to be in company in Paris: — the exhibition of oddly shaped heads, and still more oddly made wigs, being worthy of a perukial museum. I conclude I had never before beheld developed any *really* intellectual phrenological bumps!

These men, who were hooked together in groups of two or more, by process of button-holding and *for* the process of prosification, made a line respectfully for the grooms of the chambers and contemptuously for me; for I give my readers to conceive what must have been the effect produced by an essenced beau of the court of

George IV. with shapely waist, curled whiskers, and all Delcroix distilling from his cambric, amid those greasy rogues, — artists, men of letters, men of syllables, — academicians, members of the Institute, and all the dirty-dogery of literature.

Everybody knows the retort of the Duke of Richelieu to Restaut the grammarian, when they met at the French Academy. "*Moi, je suis ici pour ma grammaire.*" said the learned man. "*Et moi, pour mon grandpère,*" — replied the wit. Biot, the first man I met at the *Ministre de l'Instruction Publique*, was there for the longitude, — I, clearly, as a latitudinarian. — But

Magis magnos clericos non sunt magis magnos sapientes,  
or, as the bitter Regnier writes

*Les plus grands clercs ne sont pas les plus fins!*

I would not have recommended anybody to talk about latitudinarians to the woman who rose to perform her three official curtsies to my three bows of ceremony, as I was ushered to the foot of her arm-chair! — She had a little *moyen age* fan of peacock's feathers in her hand, which formed a truly appropriate adornment; for never did I see a woman so conceitedly self-absorbed. Severe as a statue of Nemesis, I had done injustice to her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, by instituting a parallel between them. Queen Bess in her ruff and farthingale was light and easy by comparison; and Madame la Comtesse de St. Gratien, doing the honours of her *Ministère* to half a dozen women who looked as if dug out of the Escorial, and two hundred men who might have been de-mummified out of the Pyramids, assumed a rigidity of form and feature, reminding one far more of the print of Bloody Mary in the school editions of Hume's History of England.

How naturally one begins to talk of editions in such company! — I began to beat my brains for something square and solid enough to utter, in the audible tone where-with I found it was now necessary to accost the stately Minerva to whom I had so often whispered trifles light as air; but whose present device was

*Singula quæque locum teneant sortita decenter.*

Before I had time, however, to rake up in my memory

some of the musty truisms of old Votefilch, (for I was afraid to have recourse to the casket of jewels I had pilfered from Danby, — as thieves after priggish a pocket-book attempt to pass the five pound flimsies rather than the hundred pound notes,) the new Queen of Sheba fastened upon me with her project for an investigation of the archives contained in the White Tower of London; among which, she protested, were certain State Papers of the first race, carried off from Vincennes during the Regency of the Duke of Bedford.

I hardly knew, (Eton and Oxford forgive me!) that there had been a Duke of Bedford antecedent to him who invented long-tailed sheep and short-horned cattle, or something of that description, whose bronze effigy affords roosting place to the sparrows somewhere about the North-West passage of Bloomsbury. I was scarcely aware of any other Regency than that of Carlton House; — or that Vincennes had existed prior to the time when it was rendered the Golgotha of the Duke d'Enghien, clearly by the hand of Providence, for every single *human* being concerned in the execution has made it distinctly apparent, per memoirs or protestation, that he had nothing to do with the matter. However, I recalled to mind as well as I could, for imitation, the sapient countenances of the owls exhibited at Arundel Castle; — screwed up my mouth, *and listened*, — which I take to be one of the most admirable exercises of wit, of which the human or owlish understanding is susceptible.

For twenty minutes, did Madame la Comtesse de St. Gratien hold forth on matters connected with English history, which I am certain she had been cramming from Lingard ever since our encounter at the château; and for twenty minutes, did I continue to bow affirmatively or shake my head mistrustfully, with an *air capable*; — poor Thérèse little suspecting that she was never more thoroughly a *femme incomprise* than at that moment!

The men of Gotham surrounding us, were in ecstasies, "*Quelle femme! — que de profondeur! — que d'érudition!*" resounded on all sides; while the half dozen terrible women, wives of candidates for place or riband-hunting men of letters, uttered suppressed groans of admiration. —

Here and there, an Abbè, — a race resuscitated with the Bourbons, — looked earnestly among the jostling crowd of old women in broadcloth surrounding the Minister, towards the formal circle of old women in brocade surrounding his lady, fancying perhaps that of two doses they might be the less bitter to swallow ; but so great was the privilege of approaching the Madame Necker of the day, — the Queen of the Classicists, — the pedagogue in official petticoats, — that not a soul or body of them presumed to infringe on the magic circle of l'Instruction Publique : — *risum teneatis !*

---

## CHAPTER VII.

Une femme qui ne veut s'apercevoir de rien, s'est aperçu de tout : il faut terriblement se tenir sur ses gardes avec elle. — BRUCKER.

Liberius si

Dixere quid, si forte jocosius, hoc mihi juris  
Cum veniâ dubis. — HOR. *Sat.* 4.

ABSENCE is said to extinguish slight predilections and stimulate great passions, as the wind which fans a fire, puts out a candle. — I do not recommend people who wish to maintain the brightness of their affections untarnished, whether little loves or great ones, to expose themselves to the temptations of Paris.

It is true I made a compromise with my conscience, by treating my sojourn in the gay city as a species of carnival, preparatory to the sacred solemnities of Lent ; and as I was fully determined to offer my hand and heart to Miss Vavasour immediately on my return, resolved to hold a sort of wake over the interment of my bachelorhood. To avoid contaminating the pure and bright affection of my soul by admixture with the follies of the hour, I accordingly sealed it up in a packet, and laid it on the shelf, till wanted. — And after all, plausibility apart, is not this the logic of the infidelities of most absent lovers and husbands ?

The season of the year, — for it was all the world's carnival as well as mine, — was highly propitious to the



brief madness of any wise man intent upon playing the fool. Folly is epidemic at Paris during the epoch of *bals masqués*. — The *mousse* of Champagne and the effervescence of the human spirit, are perpetually on the froth ; — and mitres and *bonnets de magistrat*, — nay, even kingly crowns, are laid aside in favour of the cap and bells. French people appear to hold their passions in command, by the turning of a peg, like the Tatar horse of the fairy tale — which one moment dashed through the air at the rate of a thousand furlongs an hour, and the next, stood motionless as the Caucasus ; — for the cap and bells once laid aside, the *bonnet de magistrat* is resumed without any sensible diminution of wisdom or authority. — It is not so with the English. — An Englishman who knows he has been making an ass of himself, is so uncommonly ashamed of his long ears, that he thinks it necessary to herd with asses for the remainder of his days. — He does not understand the privilege of desipere in loco ; — and though ready enough to drink, cannot acquire the art of getting sober, — by far the greater feat of the two.

My Public will infer, I fear, from my increasing prosi-ness, that the *Ministère de l'Instruction Publique* was doing its worst upon me. Yet I flung off the leaden chain and resumed my garland of flowers as speedily as possible : for not a moment was to be lost amid the thick-coming fêtes of that joyous season.

Ever since Helena's time, I had given up London ball-rooms. — Unless on some *very* especial temptation, I could perceive no advantage in being crushed, as in a drum of Smyrna figs, for the sake of looking at crowds of Misses as monotonous as flocks of sheep, yet inwardly ravening wolves as regarded their projects upon the lives and liberties of mankind.

But the ball-rooms of Paris, — the ball-rooms of the present day, — *parlez moi de ça !* — Instead of the monotony of those *moutonnières créatures* (as La Fontaine calls them), the variety of a case of *colibris*, at the Jardin du Roi ! — Every countenance bright with intelligence ; — every face indicating by the bloom of its roses and lilies *que l'amour*, — *printemps de l'ame*, — *avait passé par là !* — a purpose in every existence, — a specific attachment,

—preventing those pouts and frowns, those peevishnesses and sullennesses, arising from the contentions of London young ladies, all resolved to draw the great prize,—to marry the Marquis, or flirt with the Cecil Danby of the day.

The doors of such a temple revolve on golden hinges to the invisible breathing of flutes!—No cross chaperons,—no Saracenic papas, ready to hurl defiance at the mustachios of the killing captain;—no grumbling,—no sympathy with horses waiting at the door!—The only object of the women is to please; the only object of the men to show them they are successful.

I trust Madame de la Bélinaye had wit enough to perceive that she was perfectly successful in fascinating others; for I must plead guilty to inability to lay aside my John Bullism sufficiently to become *quite* a lady's lap-dog on such occasions.

Par trente-six printemps sur ma tête amassés  
Mes modestes appas n'étaient point effacés :

and I still chose to *poser en vainqueur*.

I had been too badly brought up, in the factitious atmosphere of London clubs, to understand that there are more agreeable modes of enslaving a woman than by trying to prove you are her master.—It was not easy to emerge at once from the fastidiousness, finery, and impertinence, all but brutal, of a thorough-going London man; who thinks that a kick inflicted by the toe of a highly-varnished Hoby, amounts almost to a caress.—I adventured, in short, the little gusts of caprice with which I had amused myself by blowing hot and cold upon Mrs. Brettingham;—satisfied that my genuine admiration of the charming Clémentine must penetrate through the varnish of my mask.

I was not sufficiently versed in the artificialities of Parisian nature, to understand how my conduct affected her.—I have since discovered that it was not partiality for the offender, as I then imagined, which induced her to overlook the offence.—But the novelty of the thing was voted highly amusing in her coterie.—They looked upon my strange style of making the agreeable as characteristic, national, and grotesque.

The French are worshippers of novelty. — They adore the Giraffe or Chimpanzee, so long as it is neat as imported. — They fell in love with the Cossacks who invaded them, and the Bedouins whom they invaded; and were now charmed with the originality of the man so curled, perfumed, so admirably got up, who affected the *sauvageries* of a New Zealander. — I permitted myself to be jealous. — I chose to give the law where the law was usually taken. — How charming, — how refreshing! — I was worth my weight in gold, or *vinaigre des quatre voleurs*!

“*Ah! ça ma chère, qu’as tu fais de ton brutal?*” was sometimes whispered into the ear of my charming friend, by lips which accosted *me* only with gracious words, and which I fancied moulded to permanent laudation! — Ignorance is bliss! — I was quite satisfied that I was the hero of the Carnival. And so I was. — Every puppy has its day. — The loathsome ugliness of Mirabeau, the bearishness of Jean Jacques, were furiously the fashion long before the pretentious impertinence of Cecil Danby.

The favour of the Tuileries, too, counted for something among my merits.

Is it because crowned heads are peculiarly aware of the potency of royal favouritism, that they receive with such marked distinctions the royal pet of a brother sovereign? — I have often noticed that the claims of even an Ambassador Extraordinary, are waived in honour of the man, however ignoble, on whom his brother King’s countenance is for the moment supposed to shine, — apothecary or corncutter, — Farinelli or —; a misplaced calculation, for if *really* a favourite, he is pretty sure to be kept at home.

I was amazingly noticed by Charles X. — His Majesty even took me a pheasant shooting in the woods of St. Cloud, — a diversion, compared with which attacking the barnyard at Ormington Hall would have been lively sport; — and handed me his own gun to shoot at a chevreuil in a Fontainebleau battue. I would not have taken twenty such for my own Manton; — but the honour availed me the worth of as many Mantons as would fill the small armoury of the Tower.

But alas ! for my patience, — the more I was honoured by the King, the more I was noticed by the wife of the King's minister ; and that horrible *partie de chasse* brought upon my shoulders cwt. upon cwt. of civilities from the ponderous couple of the Rue de Grenelle ! — Thérèse chose to see and surmise nothing of my more agreeable engagements. — She would not conceive it possible that I could be enlisted in the enemy's camp. — A man who had seen the light in the Château de Boulainvilliers, could not be otherwise than the faithful humble servant of the daughter of Marie Antoinette, and of *her* faithful humble servants.

I have abstained from all mention of Monsieur de la Bélinaye, because he was one of those of whom, by tacit consent of society, it was the custom to make no mention ; — an inoffensive little man, who had been married to his first cousin by his papa and mamma, his uncle and aunt ; — and because from infancy accustomed to *tréat* his cousin as his wife, he now treated his wife as his cousin. — All the time he could abstract from his duties as a royal aide de camp, the little Count devoted to the *Société pour encourager l'amélioration de la race des animaux domestiques* ; without surmising that its benefit might be extended to himself, as well as to the flocks and herds of his Berri estates. — But there really was very little occasion for him to trouble himself with the care of his wife. — Madame la Duchesse de Dijon, her mother, was always at hand to keep her in charge, — frequenting the same society, and cultivating the same pleasures ; — and Madame de la Bélinaye, in consequence perhaps of this perpetual maternal surveillance, enjoyed a reputation of irreproachability worthy of the days when "*la reine Berthe filait.*"

I was a great favourite with the Duchess, — formerly an intimate friend of Lady Ormington at the Château de Boulainvilliers, and, in her emigration days, a frequent guest at Ormington Hall.

I was always vastly amused, by the way, to hear the emigrants de *haute volée* perjuring their precious souls by attestations of their love and gratitude towards England ; when, in fact, not one of them but feels entitled to expurgatorial droits of Paradise, from the martyrdom endured among us. Many, who from sheer-starvation ate of our

venison and drank of our port wine, protest that their constitutions were ruined for life by such coarse diet ; — and those who made themselves most familiar with the bank notes of John Bull, despised him as a close-fisted fellow, for not pouring the contents of his purse into their lap in the form of louis d'ors.

Among themselves, they make no secret of these things ; and it was diverting enough to see such people as Madame de Dijon recant and screw up their mouths, for a little civility to a man so smiled upon as myself by royalties, on either side the Channel.

“ *Et ce cher Prince*, how does he wear ? ” — she used to inquire of me, alluding to the King. “ How good he was to us ! — Shall I ever forget his enticing us down to that terrible fishing-village, which he has since coaxed into a great town ; — but of which it may fairly be said, as of Louis XIV. and Versailles, *qu'il n'en ferait jamais qu'un favori sans mérite*. — Your darling Lady Clermont told him I said so ; — but, her French had luckily the merit of being incomprehensible. Did you ever hear the story of her begging Madame Victorie to notice l'Abbé de Westminster, during her visit to London, and Her Royal Highness desiring in consequence that, at whatever hour of the day or night Lady Clermont's favourite Abbé presented himself, he might be shown up ? — little did she suspect, poor soul, that our dear Vicomtesse alluded to an Abbaye some hundred feet long with towers like *les tours de Notre Dame*, instead of a *petit collet*. ”

“ *A tour de force*, certainly ! ” said I, laughing.

“ He was always charming, your dear King ! ” resumed the Duchess. “ I recollect his calling Otto, the Ambassador of Buonaparte ” (accenting the Italian *u* in the name of the Emperor) “ a vulgar fellow, for having blunderingly addressed him as ‘ *mon Prince*. ’ — He had such a delicate sense ‘ of *les convenances* ! — By the way, is it true that, some years ago, when playing the part of a somewhat superannuated Orosmane to an equally superannuated Zaïre, each of them used to devote five hours a day to getting up a toilette for a visit of twenty minutes, in which both were satisfied that instead of threescore, they appeared only five and twenty ? — *Il faudroit être née Anglaise pour s'engager en pareille corvée* ! ”

I ventured to assure her that there was no such thing in England as a woman of threescore.

"True — I had forgotten that they all die of the spleen before they attain half that age!" cried she, humoring my extravagance. — "And who can wonder! — Oh! their *vie de château*! their what they call 'sociability'! — I lost two little *griffons*, in the flower of their age, (*mais des créatures à peindre*!) during my stay at Ormington Hall; and I am sure they died only of sympathy, from seeing your dear mother and I sit yawning at each other! — What is the use of such domestic life, I only ask you? — Look at my daughter and Monsieur de la Bélinaye, for instance. Where will you ever find in England a more domestic couple? — What unanimity! — What mutual confidence! Though absent from each other for months and months at a time (for the air of Berri does not agree with Clémentine and it is indispensable to the interests of Monsieur de la Bélinaye's property that he should reside there a considerable portion of the year, — during which my daughter remains at Paris or the environs, with her family), not a feeling of mistrust, — not a jealous inquiry on either side! — They are tranquil, — they are happy, — they are incapable of the vulgar *tracasseries*, which I so often witnessed in England. By the way, *Madame votre chère mère* was not the happiest woman in the world *en fait de ménage*."

A hint to the Duchess that I was wearing mourning for *Madame ma chère mère*, silenced her indiscreet revelations; and I satisfied her meanwhile by assurances of my high respect for the domestic felicity of her daughter and nephew.

To my great surprise I soon afterwards discovered that I had never yet seen Monsieur de la Bélinaye: for one fine day, there arrived a little gentleman from the country, — who figured as master at the Hotel de la Bélinaye, and at the Tuileries *l'épée au côté* and a *chapeau plumé*, as Aide de Camp; — whom the Dauphin called *mon cher*, and Madame de la Bélinaye *mon ami*, and I, a great bore. — The little insignificant fellow I had hitherto seen accompany Clémentine in public, and often found on the stairs of her Hôtel, turned out to be only another cousin, a sort of *souffre douleur*, to call carriages and write notes for her, — a better kind of upper servant.

Monsieur le Comte, however, was very little more in my way than Monsieur le cousin. — My delight in the society of Clémentine consisted in the interchange of those pleasant nothings and devoted looks which, in England, are classed under the comprehensive though incomprehensible name of flirtation: — and we looked and talked very much the same, whether Monsieur le Comte were tyrannizing over his *régisseurs* in Berri, or tyrannized over by his royal master of the Pavillon de Flore.

On the contrary, I felt more at my ease after Bélinaye's arrival. — I had sometimes fancied myself in the way at the Hotel de la Bélinaye, while mistaking the Vicomte de Clainville for the husband of Clémentine. But now that I found it the custom of the house to tolerate the loungery of morning visits, I made myself completely at home; more particularly because, thanks to a proposal I hazarded to Monsieur de la Bélinaye, in the style of Madame de St. Gratien's to myself, to effect an interchange of Merinos and South Downs, Norman cows and Suffolk punches, between Ormington Hall and Le Berri, I became an immense favourite with the model of marital happiness of the Duchesse de Dijon.

It was a wonderfully brilliant carnival. — Our Ambassador gave a ball, and Madame de Goutaut another, the fame of which remains proverbial to the present day; and I enjoyed myself, in that brief interval between the house of mourning from which I had escaped, and the house of matrimony to which I was hastening, much as a school-boy enjoys himself on a Sunday holiday.

It is amazing how one rejuvenizes in Paris. I felt almost a boy again. I seemed to tread on air. "My bosom's lady sat lightly on her throne." — Clémentine was such an airy, cheery, sunshine creature! — Like Perdita, she "turned all to prettiness and favour." — Mariana, like most London beauties, subjected her friends to so tight a reign, that she would have hardened the mouth of an Arabian. Half my interviews with *her* used to be absorbed by peevish chidings, — reproaches for having stayed too long away, or kept her waiting, or neglected to answer a note; except indeed when, after my acquaintance with Sophronia, she had real cause for displeasure, and consequently dared not betray it.

But Madame de la Bélinaye was like the summer's day that wakes us with sunshine and the carol of the lark, and brightens our path with flowers. "Mere want of sensibility!" will urge some sullen *femme incomprise*. — Perhaps so! — But now that I have enjoyed a certain experience of black, brown, and fair, whether of temper or complexion, I am decidedly of opinion that the sensibility which, like an Andalusian, carries a *dague en jarretière* to stab a rival to the heart, or which smashes looking-glasses, like Byron's Margarita Coggi, is a horrible nuisance.

I never saw a cloud on the brow of Clémentine. I could as easily fancy one upon the pink cheeks of a Dresden shepherdess, whose transparent apron has been full of flowers, and whose glossy smiles and dimples unchanged, for more than a century.

If I sent her one of Madame Prévost's pretty bouquets, the most *banal* compliment you can offer to a Frenchwoman, she was sure to acknowledge it by a *petit mot* full of grace and graciousness. If I claimed her hand for a waltz, she granted it with a smile that made a common form of society a concession. Her sweetness and elegance rendered her *really* an ornament to a ball-room; and it is the multitude of such ornaments which constitute the unequalled charm of the Parisian fêtes.

One morning, after one of these charming balls, I was sauntering on horseback at an early hour towards the Bois de Boulogne; when, in the new route de Charles X., coming from the royal stud-house, I met my friend Monsieur de la Bélinaye. As I was at that very moment meditating treasons against him too heinous to be recapitulated, it bored me immensely that he chose to turn his horse's head and accompany me in my ride. — He was mounted on a fine animal of his own breeding; and everybody knows the vexation of riding with an ass who is riding on a horse, the points of which he prides himself on exhibiting. — For the sake of Clémentine, however, I bore patiently both with the horse and ass; and was hypocrite enough to coincide in his opinion that, in a few years, the palm of jockeyship would be conceded by Newmarket to the Champs de Mars. — Ahem!



By this disgraceful concession, I brought him into so charming a humour, that I was in hopes he would ride off and leave me to the enjoyment of my previous cogitations. But the ass was obstinate as a mule, and chose to bear me company.

"*Apropos, mon cher Danby,*" cried he, — as I was preparing, when we reached the gates of Bagatelle to gallop off and get rid of him, — "*sais tu que tu as des torts graves envers ce pauvre Vicomte !*"

"What Viscount, — and what have I done to him ?" — said I, with affected carelessness.

"*Le petit Clainville !* — I found him dreadfully out of spirits on my return from the country. — It seems you have been infringing his privileges as the cavalier of Clémentine and her mother. — During my absence, Madame de la Bélinaye very prudently selects my nearest relative as her escort in public ; and Clainville and my mother-in-law get on admirably together ; which *entre nous soit dit*, is not so easy a matter, — for the Duchess, though a charming woman, is the very devil."

I bowed as acquiescingly as he seemed to expect, — and on recovering his breath, he proceeded.

"Since your arrival, however, I find that Madame de Dijon has become horribly capricious with poor Clainville, and that even Clémentine has to reproach herself with some inconsistency in her conduct. Reflect upon this, my dear Danby ! — You are here but for a short time, — for a moment, as one might say ; — and you will perhaps compromise the happiness of a *liaison* likely to last for life. Clainville is the most obliging amiable fellow in the world, — He was fixed in my house like one of the chairs or tables — ready to come or go at a moment's notice ; and in leaving Clémentine to his care during my absence, it was like confiding her to the Banque de France. — It would really give me pain should any little misunderstanding arise on your account, capable of overclouding our domestic happiness."

"Why not say *their* domestic happiness at once ?" thought I — for, I was exasperated by his imbecility. However, the despair of Monsieur le Vicomte was good encouragement for *me* ; and I could scarcely restrain myself from

giving a cut with my whip to the spirited horse which poor little La Bélinaye found it no easy matter to manage, and, galloping off while he lay prostrate in the mud, profit by the intelligence he had unwittingly afforded.

I was to meet Clémentine that night at a ball given by Monsieur de Chabrol, the Préfet de la Seine, at the Hotel de Ville ; and never shall I forget how my heart throbbed when I saw her enter the gallery in her simple white dress, trimmed with natural bouquets of Parma violets, the same delicious flowers being interspersed among the diamond leaves ornamenting her hair. She was leaning, as usual, on her mother's arm, the Vicomte obsequiously following with her fan and *flacon* — an assiduity which had obtained for him the sobriquet of *le portemanteau de Madame de la Bélinaye*.

Clémentine was engaged to begin the ball with one of the Neapolitan princes just then visiting Paris. But when I advanced to request her hand for the second quadrille or a waltz, I found myself interrupted by Madame de Dijon, who, on pretence of wanting a glass of *eau sucrée*, sent me off ; and when I returned, Madame de la Bélinaye had taken her place among the dancers.

"My dear friend," said the Duchess, leading me off towards the pillars, from which we commanded a view of the adjoining room where Clémentine was dancing, with the Vicomte posted behind her close as her shadow, — "this really must not go on ! — Consider, *mon cher Danby*, what you are about. You are going away, next week, — *pas vrai ?* — and for eight days' amusement, you would actually sacrifice the peace of mind of a very estimable man. — Clainville is a worthy creature, — *un homme d'honneur*, who would give his life for Clémentine or her husband ; and my daughter is a woman perfectly well brought up, and *incapable de manquer à ses devoirs*. The world views their friendship with approbation. — In *your case* it would be otherwise. Society, so rigid in its principles, would feel that *your* attentions were of a different nature. You are here *en passant*. — Your love for Clémentine might inflict a lasting injury. *Croyez moi !* desist from assiduities that are beginning to be noticed ; and prove yourself worthy to be the son of Lady Ormington, and an object of esteem to the august family of the Bourbons."

I could scarcely maintain a grave countenance at this absurd adjuration. — I had often been assured that *la morale* of Paris was “*affreuse* ;” I had not expected to find it ridiculous.

But stranger far than the appeal of the husband and mother, — or if not stranger, far more marvellous, — was Clémentine’s hint in the course of the evening, that, finding my civilities a source of inquietude to her family — (including, I suppose, Monsieur le Vicomte de Clainville — little brute!) — she should be really obliged to me to refrain from further visits — further nosegay-sending, — and so forth ; — and on my proceeding to accuse her in no measured terms of a preference for the *portemanteau*, she quietly replied, with her usual charming smile, that she and Gustave de Clainville had been brought up together, and that for worlds she would not give him pain !

I wonder I did not kill her — *or him* ! — I killed nothing however but a pair of post-horses, in my haste to reach Calais. — I was in a state of indignation impossible to describe. I fancied that the whole society in which we had been flirting was aware of the hopes I had entertained, and would become aware of the rebuffs I had received.

I might have spared the poor post-horses. — Society recognized in Madame de la Bélinaye a woman, as she was styled by the Duchess, *parfaitement bien élevée et incapable de manquer à ses devoirs — surtout envers son portemanteau*. — The only fault they found with me was my having quitted Paris (on pretence of business) without soliciting an audience of adieu from the King. — For they settled it that I only went because the Carnival was at an end and Carême beginning ; and in the time of Charles X., Carême was indeed a season of sackcloth and ashes !

That I could be so little a man of the world as to resent the prudent conduct of Madame de la Bélinaye, was a charge not to be lightly brought against a man born in the Château de Boulainvilliers, and bred in the Castle of Windsor.

But I had not reached the heart of the mystery. Many a long year afterwards, I discovered from one of the confidentials of the Carlist Court whom I met in exile at

Pera, that the anti-climax of my romance was the work of Madame la Comtesse de St. Gratien !

In the interests of *la morale publique*, she had insinuated such scandals into the ear of Madame la Dauphine, as produced a royal sermon to the poor Duchess, and a maternal sermon to poor Clémentine ; and even the aid of a conjugal sermon had been ultimately called in, much to the injury of his Majesty Charles the Tenth's contractor for post-horses of Montreuil-sur-Mer.

The gods are just and of our pleasant vices  
Make instruments to scourge us !

How glad I am that, absorbed by other interests, I stirred not so much as my little finger in behalf of the most unpopular ministry in Europe, or the private satisfaction of the most revengeful woman,—by obtaining an order to ransack the Record Office of the White Tower, for the archives carried off from Vincennes, during the Regency of the Duke of Bedford !

## CHAPTER VIII.

Qu' on ne s'attende pas aux matières, mais à la façon que j'y donne : qu'on voye, en ce que j'emprunte, si j'ai sceu choisir de quoy rehauser mon propos. Je ne compte pas mes emprunts, je les poise. Ils sont tous, ou peut s'en fault, de noms si fameux et si anciens, qu'ils me semblent se nommer assez sans moy. — MONTAIGNE.

I dream'd, 'twas on a birth-day night  
A sumptuous palace rose to sight,  
The builder had through every part  
Observed the chastest rules of art,  
Raphael and Titian there display'd  
All the full force of light and shade.  
Around, the liveried servants wait,  
And the First life-guards kept the gate. — CORROUX.

THE ancient ballads of Spain, England, and France have put on record instances, too numerous to be included in this advertisement, of the fatal results of long absence between lovers and even married people, when Christian knights used to go and fight in Palestine, and Christian ladies to remain twirling their spindles at home. — Even

then, fidelity was a rare virtue; and from the days of the Crusades till now, little has been done I fear to cultivate its propagation.

I am not saying this to excuse my own enormities; but I appeal to the fine gentlemen of the day whether the strongest passion recognized at Crockford's be capable of standing out a long day's journey on the rail, with some new fair face immediately opposite, — or a week's tour on the Continent among multitudes of faces less fair than piquant. — It is absurd to think of it! — Constancy is a purely pastoral virtue; and exists for the great world only in gilt edged tomes of select poetry, and Italian canzonets.

A beautiful landscape excites our fervent admiration. We gaze upon it with enthusiasm till we fancy its outlines indelibly impressed on our memory, — leave it with regret, — and for a time, recall its beauties to mind with delight and truth. — At the end of a few days, we should be uncommonly puzzled to sketch even a faint resemblance of our favourite scene. — We cannot remember whether the church tower appeared above the wood, or whether the ruins were above or below the bridge. Our recollections become perplexed. We grow angry with ourselves and our picture. We resolve to try again another time. We never *do* try. The whole thing has become a bore. It is better to enjoy the new view before us, than harass our mind with unavailing and bewildering reminiscences.

Thus is it that most human passions, unless stereotyped by positive engagements, stand the test of absence. I address myself on this occasion, with sentiments truly paternal, to the younger and fairer portion of my readers; for it grieves me to see the dear little souls deluded by themselves and others into confidence in the fidelity of those who go shooting on the moors, or masquing at the Carnival, or yachting in the Mediterranean; and who are pretty sure to be forsworn before they attain Calais or Berwick upon Tweed. — In these days of chemical substitutes and general adulteration, there is no such thing in the market as genuine love. — It may be shown about in samples, but the lot will not stand the test of purchase and possession. — Try!

My Public will perceive what was passing in my mind as I sat pensively down to a Maintenon cutlet, that looked hugely like a shoulder of mutton wrapt in the mainsail of a man of war, at the new and fashionized edition of the Ship Inn, Dover, which now called itself Hotel.—Heartily ashamed of myself, I sought out all the sophistries within reach, to excuse my frailty.—The truth was that my love or esteem for Sophronia Vavasour formed a species of pastoral interlude in my noisy, heartless life; and the bray of the trumpet of worldliness had drowned the faintly remembered echoes of that still small music.

The less said and the less thought about it, the better.—I had not pledged myself to return. The court was in London; and unless compelled to visit Windsor, there was no absolute occasion for me to present myself at Sunning Hill.—Such separations without further explanation, are matters of daily occurrence. Miss Vavasour had no more to complain of than hundreds of others.

From the moment I set foot in London, however, all thought on the subject was banished from my mind.—I found Society in an uproar, as for an O. P. riot.—Such outcries,—such outfallings,—such tattling,—such battling,—such rows,—such vows,—such a coming together by the ears of Gorgons, Hydras, and Chimeras dire!

It was a long time since the plague of party spirit had visited London;—and all the long repressed raging and storming of the Pittite and Foxite factions, were out-stormed and out-raged by the frenzy of the Philo-Catholics and Anti-Catholics.—There had been two or three duels, there were likely to be a dozen more; and certain Countesses were calling names and pulling caps in the gallery of the House, in a style that called to mind the viragos in the tribunes of the National Assembly.

It is indispensable I suppose that every great political crisis should afford an outlet for the escape of human folly; as the hurricane that stirs up the majesty of the waves produces also a superabundance of froth and foam.—But it strikes me that there are quite men enough in the world to talk the nonsense required, without calling in the aid of those so much better occupied in threading beads and

wearing them afterwards. Oh! those women of what are called masculine understandings! — Give me to listen to an orchestra of kettle drums, or a symphony of corntes à pistons, or a Chinese Tom-Tom-ing of the Evil spirits, rather than the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals of their empty argumentations: — whereof, as Cicero says, —

'harum sententiarum quæ vera sit, deus aliquis viderit!

The whole frame of the beau monde was broken up. — No more large parties! — The solution of the Catholic Question served at least to relieve society from the curse of crammed assemblies, for half the world no longer chose to meet the other half. — The consequence was that people who wanted to distinguish themselves by partizanship, set up in their houses *des bureaux de politique*, somewhat resembling the *bureaux d'esprit* of Paris in the olden time. — It was a pretext for selection, — a new order of exclusivism; — and among those who rose cent. per cent. by their promptitude on the occasion, was Mrs. Brettingham; who not only turned to account the vote of her husband, but became the centre of a circle, by giving incessant dinners to the more industrious cultivators of the graft of Liberalism which had budded out of the decayed old trunk of Tory Intolerance.

Never having visited the land of tabinets and Orange lodges, I was not prepared for the hubbub creatable by a sufficient vociferation of the words "Protestant succession," and "Catholic disabilities;" — and I confess my own prejudices were so far enlisted under the old banner, that I was glad to escape hearing the speech of Danby, which his party pronounced so fine a one, (and which will probably be included in the 150th edition of Enfield's Speaker published in the year 1941,) setting forth his progressive change of opinions on this strife-stirring question. Howbeit, my brother was not one of those who committed himself by recanting in February his profession of faith of the July preceding, — for *his* enlightenment on the subject was the growth of years, — I should not have cared to witness any variation of principle in one who to *me* appeared oracular as the Gods.

It was supposed, (one always says it was *supposed*

when afraid of being called to account for one's sayings,) that the arguments of Danby were not without effect in converting, during the recess, those two great pillars of Protestantism who had found that the only means of keeping the fabric still aloft, was by the admission of their insufficiency and the extension of their bases. — My brother's rejection of place, and superiority to party influence or press reputation, imparted the utmost force to his opinions; and the Commanders in Chief saw that if *he* had given up the dilapidated old fortress as untenable, it was time to evacuate.

I had no reason to infer from any boast of his own that his influence had effected these marvels. But I could entertain little doubt of it after listening for half an hour to the patient eloquence with which, in our own family party, he attempted to mollify the obstinacy of Lord Ormington. — His lordship was a most mulish Anti-Catholic; — his lordship was an Irish tithe owner, and English boroughholder; and his lordship rightly conjectured that the light of day once admitted into the old lumber-room of parliamentary prejudices, a general clearance must ensue, — the cobwebs be swept out, — the reptiles rejected.

He consequently refused to hear the voice of the charmer, long after the other deaf adders had opened their ears; and to me it was a spectacle almost affecting, to see the forbearing and respectful patience with which Danby listened to the platitudes of that foolish fond old man, ere he attempted to make himself heard in his turn. — Even when the attempt *was* made, it was so tenderly and deprecatingly effected, that a mother soothing the impatience of a fretful child could not have evinced greater consideration.

He did not try to cajole the old man out of his opinions. His arguments were as manfully arrayed as they were softly spoken; — like Lear's soldiers, they were shod with felt. But how potent were their arms!

This was indeed the filial piety of the stork, bearing the superannuated parent aloft on his powerful pinion. Submissive to Lord Ormington's starts of temper, heedless of his taunts, long-suffering with his arrant incomprehensive-



ness, — Danby renewed, and recapitulated, and re-arranged his arguments, till, like a stupid child over its primer, by mere force of iteration, Lord Ormington was made to understand that though c, a, t, might spell cat, when people found it necessary to spell dog, they must look about them for other letters.

I could perceive by the expression of Danby's eye, the heartfelt delight with which he at length discovered that his eloquence was triumphant. It would have been a severe mortification to him to find the vote of his father recorded against a measure, to which he had lent the support of his voice.

Another person besides myself was often present at these family discussions, whose countenance was scarcely a less interesting study than that of my brother, — his pupil, Jane. Without presuming to open her lips upon a subject of so grave a nature, it was plain to perceive from her variations of complexion, how thoroughly the young girl entered into all that was going on. — To *her*, her father's voice was as a divine manifestation; and she drank in its sounds, as the sands of the East imbibe a shower, — rendering back instantaneous verdure. — No need of argument to convince Jane. My brother's decree was her law. *She* listened to his flowing eloquence as to a strain of solemn music, and, recognizing the being of a brighter sphere, wondered how the obduracy of the incredulous apostle could so long hold out!

Danby did not seem even to wonder. Nothing was perceptible in *his* deportment save earnest desire for the conversion of his expected proselyte. — Only once did I see him out of temper, on the occasion, — and that was with myself. — Irritated by the obtuseness of the old man, I allowed myself to exclaim in a tone of irritation — “Good God! my lord — surely you must have sense enough to perceive that —” I forget what; — but I do not forget the look of dignity with which my brother turned towards me, I had not seen him assume such an air since, nearly twenty years before, he had surveyed me from the hearth rug of Lady Ormington's drawing-room, on the day of our dining together at Votefilch's froggery.

It was plain to perceive, at that moment, which of us

stood in the presence of his father: a singular exemplification of the Judgment of the wisest of kings!

Thanks to his gentle prudence, meanwhile, my brother succeeded. —

Ut hymettia sole  
Cera remollescit, tractataque pollice multas,  
Vertitur in facies, ipsoque fit utilis usu, —

the old gentleman voted in the end after his son's own heart.

There was a person meanwhile, — or rather a personage, who, I suspect, was almost as grievously tormented by the political exigencies of the time, as my Lord Ormington; a personage who, though, *like* Lord Ormington, he ceded to the force of circumstances, ceded not without bitter reluctance: — the King! — George IV. had embraced Toryism as a man in terror of the violence of the waves embraces the spar to which he entrusts his life, — with a sort of spasmodic clutch. — To relinquish his hold by even a single finger, was a sacrifice; — more especially considering the John Knoxiades to which he was subjected by having to appear in public, like King Henry in Shakspeare's play, between two reverend divines. — His constitution was already deeply shaken. — He was ill. He was nervous. His defeats were beginning. — Like Louis XIV., in the decline of his years and fortunes, he began to fear that Providence was ungrateful for his support!\*

I was really sorry for him. — Between infirmity of body and tenderness of conscience, which are perhaps more closely correspondent than one cares to allow, the King was sorely ill at ease. — We kept Easter at Windsor; and scarcely had I travelled a mile upon the Hounslow road, when my conscience became almost as fidgetty as if I too had taken a coronation oath, and been subjected to the exhortations of my royal chaplain!

So accustomed had I been, a few months before, to regard every milestone upon that road as an obstacle

\* Louis le Grand is said to have exclaimed on hearing of one of the victories of the Allies, — “*Dieu a donc oublié tout ce que j’ai fait pour lui ?*”

dividing me from Sophronia and happiness, that the one marked

FROM HYDE PARK  
CORNER  
I MILE.

seemed to stand forth upon the highway and reprove me, like a second Nathan.

Villain that I was! — what a traitor had I been to all that was good and fair, since last I paid toll at the Kensington turnpike! — I swear I blushed to think of myself. I had so completely razed poor Silwood and all its associations from the tablets of my brain for the last two months, that there now rushed upon me, as if after the lapse of years, a torrent of overwhelming reminiscences. — I began to wonder how I had ever found courage to break the ties of such a connexion. — All the claims of Miss Vavasour began to reconcentrate themselves into a shape terribly palpable. — I had been her all but declared lover; yet a few days' inevitable absence, had tempted me to an absence of months at my own good liking. — I had acted at the instigation of a caprice, — caring little whose happiness might suffer, so my own pleasure were secure!

It was the balmy April day, — a wondrous restorative to the human frame and to the animal spirits it exhales, — which some call the soul and some the heart, to the great confusion of metaphysics.

Green leaflets were emerging from the little brown shells which form the first curious vegetation of spring; and green feelings began to peep out of my own somewhat hardened nature. — By the time we reached the turn after leaving Egham, where I had been often in the habit of diverging from the Windsor road towards Sunning Hill, I grew very spoony indeed; — and had not the carriage on whose cushions of yellow silk I was reposing, borne on its panel a royal crown, methinks I should have cut off at once to the feet of my Nea; pleaded guilty to all of which she

might see fit to accuse me, and implored permission to reinstate myself in the position I had abandoned.

The spot where this sudden perception of my unworthiness rushed into my mind, was precisely the place where, three months before, I had been so oppressed by evil omens touching the illness of my poor mother. There were no howling winds now, — no pitiless sleety showers; yet I swear that the weather, sunshiny as it was, appeared fifty times more cheerless. — To me, no season of the year is so disagreeable as the moment when a glaring spring sunshine makes one pant after the shade and refreshment of verdure, while the branches are still as naked as an Irish beggar. — The turf which has not yet resumed its healthy smoothness, is fresh in one place and withered in another, like the cheeks of a lady of a certain age. — Even the violets breathing from every hedge, seem a sort of premature and misplaced concession. — The eglantine and honeysuckle vouchsafe their gentle odours only when there are gentle hands astir to pluck them from their obscurity; while those rash harbingers of spring — but I am getting Shenstonian! — I humbly ask pardon; — for though I fancied myself in love just then, I am under no such illusion now.

On arriving at the Castle, I was beset by duties of office which fortunately occupied my attention so much as to give my conscience a respite. It was not till a late hour the following afternoon, when all the phaeton work was past and over, and the sun gone in, and the weather getting chilly, that I managed to make my way across the park to Sunning Hill. — Saladin pricked up his ears as he took the well-known road. — I am afraid he was far less a brute of the two!

I had gone a slapping pace till I reached the gates of Silwood Park, on the confines of which domain the cottage was situated. But no sooner did I attain the belt of scraggy firs, marking where the last enclosure had subtracted the waste lands of Bagshot from heath and honey-bee, than I drew in my rein. — I was beginning to feel uncomfortable, — to settle my collar, — blow my nose, — clear my throat, and perform all the little manœuvres of a gentleman embarrassed in his feelings. It was many years

since Cecil Danby had been so thoroughly discountenanced.

One of the peculiar graces of Annie and Sophronia, in my estimation, was the delicate niceness of their habits of life, — a niceness wholly apart from finery or affectation. Everything about them was in its place, — everything appropriate, — everything lady-like: and the cottage, albeit really a cottage, might, from its orderliness of array, have formed a beautiful rustic ornament for a table in one of the state rooms at Windsor Castle.

The first thing that struck me as I now approached it from the brow of the hill commanding a view of the garden, was a spread of clothes drying upon the grass! — The lawn where I had so often looked unutterable things into the eyes of Sophronia, now looked unmentionables at me! — As I live by bread, nankin shorts and Bandana handkerchiefs seemed to have grown like mushrooms out of the soil.

"These men are come, then!" — thought I. — "Beasts that they must be, to have introduced such habits into the family."

I had half a mind to hurry away from the little Eden thus vilely desecrated; but Saladin seemed determined to push on.

"Are the ladies at home?" said I to a frightened maid in curl-papers, who, after much ringing, opened the gate; — and on her giving a sort of shuffle and murmur in the affirmative, I followed her into the house.

The dining-room, which formed a sort of vestibule to the large drawing-room, — smelt fearfully of beer and cheese, as I passed through it; and lo! on the chintz sofa, whereon I had so often rested side by side with my charming friends, was seated a rotund gentleman in gaiters, who stared at me through his spectacles till my heart quailed within me; Mr. Vavasour, of course, — the first fat or rubicund West Indian I had ever seen.

"You're a sharp hand at a bell-wire, young man! — What's your business?" said he — without rising, as brutally as if addressing a tax-gatherer.

"I have done myself the honour of calling, Sir, to inquire after the health of your daughters," I replied, call-

ing up my utmost graces of person and manner, to reprove this insolent familiarity.

"I'll just trouble *you*, Sir, to take yourself out of this, and not be putting off your sauce upon *me*!" — cried my host, half rising, and letting fall a violent thump upon the table before him, whereon the sketch-books of Sophronia had been used to lie, and where now steamed in their place a tumbler of mahogany-coloured brandy and water.

Imperturbable in ordinary emergencies, I own I stood aghast! — A sworn enemy however to attempts after scenic effect in simple narratives like the present, I shall content myself with concluding that my Public has been more sagacious than myself, in divining that the gentleman of nankins and strong Cheshire was *not* my future father-in-law; — though I can scarcely hope that its clairvoyance will extend to the discovery that the Greysdales had given up the cottage, three weeks before; and that the landlord, a retired grocer of Staines, was enjoying himself in his Tusculum for the remainder of their term, while waiting a summer tenant.

To such a man, when a few more insolences had elicited these explanations, I judged it better to announce myself specifically; and the hereditary and official honours of a Cecil Danby had more than the effect I had anticipated in reducing the savage to a state of pacification. — I verily believe he would have ended by offering me a tumbler similar to his own, had I not stopped short his civilities by an interrogatory concerning his recent tenants.

He had little to relate; but that little was not disadvantageous. — "Mr. Vavasour was a thick-and-through gentleman; — had booked up forty pounds for breakage, without so much as looking over the inventory; and it would be a great pleasure to *him* to get such another tenant if so be as I knowed of any one with an eye to the premises. — He *had* hoped to keep the Westingens on through the summer. But the young lady had been so much worse since her father's arrival, that they left at last at a minute's notice."

I began to tremble. The departure of the family and my bitter disappointment, so strangely brought to my mind the sudden departure of poor Emily that —

"Miss Vavasour was not *seriously* indisposed, I hope?" faltered I, determined to know the worst.

"Miss? — Why, bless your heart; 'twere the married sister as was nigh going off the perch," replied my facetious acquaintance. "I am afraid there was some kind of little unpleasantness betwixt her and her good gentleman, — as is oftentimes the case where married folks has been living apart. — Between friends, Sir, a terrible scuffle afore getting off! — However, it doesn't become *me* to talk, to whom the family behaved so handsome; and so, Sir, you'll please to excuse me."

I tried again — but it would not do. When I attempted to worm further particulars out of him, he renewed *his* endeavours to make a house-agent of me; — and I was forced to retreat.

As I went out, the frightened maid, divested of her curl-papers, was making the agreeable to Saladin over the garden palings, to which I had tied him; — and never shall I forget the snuff of indignation with which he received her advances! — It was a sunless April evening; and on mounting him, I buttoned up my coat to my chin, with an indescribable sense of ill-usage. I was almost determined to take cold, to revenge myself upon these people.

What did they mean by this abrupt departure? — It seemed almost a fatality that I could never fall in love in a regular way! — With all the young ladyships regularly entered for matrimony in the peerage, — with all the stationary Misses to be found in Grosvenor Square and its environs, — I seemed destined to be perpetually mocked by accouplement with fleeting and unsubstantial things!

Hard matter was it that day to listen to a great deal about nothing that interested me, and say nothing about a great deal that interested me, which forms a chief duty of courtiership. — However I got through the evening. — I got through the night, — I got through the morrow; and while seeming to sympathize in the rejoicings of all about me at having got rid for a time of London and its political dissensions, I felt impatient as a child of the isolation of that gorgeous retreat, — that stately mockery, — that wilderness of marble and gilding, set up in the midst of the fields, as if to render its tawdry glare more contemptible by contrast with the majesty of nature.

To own the truth, I was a little out of sorts with England as well as with Silwood Cottage, Windsor Castle, and myself. — The Tuileries and Louvre had not tended to enhance the dignities of English Nash-ianity. — Everything seemed diminished to a meaner scale. — The proportions of our domestic architecture appeared vilely contracted, the furniture mis-matched, the colours inharmonious, the gold lustreless, the very light of day saddened by the overclouded humidity of atmosphere.

And then the human groups, — how ponderously in accordance with the overloaded heaviness of a scene, fine rather than rich, — solemn rather than dignified! — No play of spirits, — nothing exciting to the mind or cordial to the heart! — How I missed the playful *finesse* of the society of Clémentine. How I longed for the dash of that ærial car of pleasure, without drag or drawback; — secure from collision on a road where all are proceeding towards the same object and at the same pace! — At Paris, I should not have had to surrender myself to the dumps, because I had quarrelled with Cecil Danby!

Next day, I contrived to obtain a royal commission for town; not as my co-mates were in the habit of contriving it, because I wanted a pretext for an hour at White's to brighten up my small talk for the royal dinner table. My object was to seek out at Egham, the medical man who had attended Mrs. Greysdale, and obtain, if possible, some insight into the movements of the family. — The said Dr. L. was a pet aversion of mine, as a man I had never been able to keep at a proper distance. He was one of those who presume upon the sort of favour that attends the assuager of torment in the house of sickness; and I have heard him jest with Sophronia in a tone of familiarity that tempted me to set my foot upon him. Nay he once patted *me* patronizingly on the back, in approval of some opinion I was expressing to Mrs. Greysdale when he entered the room in the discharge of his daily, pulse-feeling, pill-driving errand.

No surer feeler of a man's time of life, by the way, than his estimate of physicians. While young and vigorous, and what Blair defines as "complexionally-pleasant men of health," we despise them as cobblers of the human frame, and pity the patients whom they cobbler; — nor,



till our own stitches begin to drop, do we learn to respect the awl that is to reunite our soles with our bodies; and admit that, for want of them

Millions have died of medicable wounds.

Now that gout and dyspepsia have screwed me in their vices, or rather, now that my vices have screwed me into gout and dyspepsia, instead of wondering that a country doctor should have presumed to slap a satellite of majesty on the shoulder, I wonder only how any man so professionally cognizant of the levelling infirmities of human nature, — a man in whose note-book the pitiful accidents of royal, gentle, and simple pathology are written down, — can find it in his powers of gravity ever to become a respecter of persons. A fantastical French writer, one of those cracked fellows through the fissures of whose brain strange lights have penetrated, observes that lawyers, doctors, and confessors, beholding human nature in all its naked truth, are widowed of all illusions; which is the reason custom has assigned them a perpetual suit of solemn black, by way of permanent mourning for the better half of existence.

I reached Egham; and Dr. L — received me at his dinner table, — apologizing for the liberty — but he could only snatch half an hour out of his day's work for rest and refreshment; and guessed, perhaps, that my visit was ex-professional. — I was rather indignant to find him take me so easy, — more particularly as I thought I discerned a sneer upon his lip when I began to enquire after Mrs. Greysdale. — His answers were short, dry and unsatisfactory as an autumnal cough. — "The family was gone — sailed for the West Indies he concluded, — he was sorry to be unable to afford me the intelligence I desired."

I saw that he pointedly avoided meeting my eye, while vouchsafing even this scanty information; and, rendered more anxious than ever by his reserve, persevered! — Not a word, however, of Sophronia! — I asked only after the health of Mrs. Greysdale, and so pertinaciously, that, at length, being, in a hurry and near the end of his appointment, he spoke out: —

"I have already told you, Sir, that Mrs. Greysdale quitted this neighbourhood in a very precarious state."

said he; "and you are placing me in a disagreeable situation, look ye, by this sort of under hand application."

I began to protest and look fierce; but being in his own dining-room, the plain-spoken man had the best of it.

"Excuse my straightfor'ardness, Mr. Danby," said he; — "but betwixt ourselves, you have done mischief enough in the family, and it seems to me that the less you meddle or make further in their affairs, the better."

"Mischief?" I exclaimed. — "You are under some strange delusion. I can assure you, Dr. L., that, up to the moment of leaving England, I was received on the most friendly footing by Mrs. Greysdale."

"Ay, ay, ay!" — interrupted the Doctor, helping himself to a clean plate from the dumb waiter, like a man to whom moments are precious; — "the old story — the old story! — too friendly by half it seems. — However, all's well that ends well. You are too fine a gentleman to be a novice in such matters. You contrived to get off to France before the husband and father arrived; and to keep out of the way so long as they remained in England. — You escaped a broken head: and if that poor gentle patient of mine should escape a broken heart —"

"What in the name of heaven are you talking about?" said I, in utter surprise.

"About what is so little my business, my good Sir," was his cool reply — "that unless you had pestered me with questions, look ye, I should not have annoyed you by my observations.

And the Doctor pursed up his mouth as closely as if I had proposed administering to him one of his own doses. — I was afraid that, like Timon, or Zanga, he had resolved to hold his tongue for the remainder of his days.

"My dear Doctor," said I, hoping to soften him, — "believe me, you are talking riddles to me. I am not aware of having inflicted a moment's pain on Mrs. Greysdale."

Dr. L. uttered an impatient grunt. — "Unless, indeed, she felt annoyed by my having quitted England without so express a declaration of attachment to Sophronia — to Miss Vavasour, — as might justify me from the charge of trifling with her affections."

— "Miss Vavasour!" muttered the Doctor, shrugging his shoulders.

"But my fortunes are precarious," I resumed, — not choosing to notice his discourteous interruptions, — "and I judged it more honourable to wait the arrival of her father before ——"

"Come, come, come!" — said the Doctor, almost angrily. — "What need of all this rigmarole to me? — you are not accountable to me, look ye, for your conduct in the family. Spare yourself the trouble and shame of disingenuousness, Mr. Danby, — for I have neither inclination or leisure to prescribe for my neighbours' affairs. From all I saw and knew of Mrs. Greysdale, I have reason to believe that the intemperance of a jealous temper decided too severely upon her conduct; and that even so far as you *did* succeed in estranging her affections from her husband, was effected by a prodigious exercise of those powers of seduction which —— But I must wish you good evening, Sir," cried he, interrupting himself by a sudden glance at his watch, — "I have an appointment, look ye, at Shrub's Hill, for seven o'clock."

"For the love of mercy, Dr. L." — cried I, — almost distracted, — "do not leave me in this state of uncertainty. Ten minutes' conversation, — just to satisfy me that ——"

"Ten minutes' delay, Sir, would worry the nervous patient who is expecting me, into a high fever. — At a more convenient season I shall be happy to enter further into your case; and ——"

A servant now entered to announce his gig. Without respect for my august presence, the Doctor began to button on his driving coat.

"If you would be good enough to get into my carriage and allow me to take you as far as Shrub's Hill?" cried I, in despair, — "we might discuss the business on our way!"

"I should be happy to oblige you," he replied, — (holding open the dining-room door, a plain gesticulation of "not a word more, but get out!") — "but I am so accustomed to my drive in the open air after dinner, that your close carriage would give me a splitting headache."

"Will you then permit me," said I, in utter desperation, "to accompany *you*?"

"But my servant, my dear Sir, — my servant! — *Who*

would have a care of my horse and gig while I visit my patients? — I have nine visits, look ye, to pay before I get home again; and ——”

“He might easily get into the rumble of my carriage, which shall follow us,” — said I, beseechingly, — “and resume his place when our conversation is at an end.”

And I suppose there was unusual earnestness depicted in my looks and manner: — for after stopping short on his own door steps and surveying me from head to foot, the Doctor gave a sudden jerk of the head, and altered his “get out!” to “get in!” — “We may discuss the whole history in a couple of miles,” said he, as I obeyed his word of command; “as well now, perhaps, as another time.”

Now that I reconsider the matter, I wish I had noticed the air of my attendant, — for I was travelling in one of the royal carriages, — on finding the Doctor’s nondescript in an oil-skin hat and cape, insinuate his leathern gaiters into the rumble beside the varnished boots adorning his own civilized extremities. — As to *me*, all Cecil Danby as I was, never did I feel more grateful than for the concession that entitled me to take my place on the greasy cushions of a shandrydan, worthy to have graced the travels of an Welch curate of the last century, or Dr. Syntax in his Tour in search of the Picturesque.

“Well, Sir,” said the Doctor, as soon as he had rattled off the stones, (the easy chariot gliding noiselessly as a shadow behind us) — as if waiting impatiently for the interrogations which had encumbered him with so adhesive a visiter.

“I was in hopes you would be good enough to explain to me, Sir,” said I somewhat embarrassed, “what had given rise to your supposition that Mr. Greysdale entertained any unpleasant impression of the object of my attentions to his wife.”

“You had better ask me to explain what gave rise to the general idea of the neighbours, and servants, and other tittle-tattlers of a place, which, abounding like all court neighbourhoods in cottages of gentility, is especially addicted to tittle-tattle,” said the Doctor, dwelling emphatically upon every word, “that you were taking unfair advantage of Mrs. Greysdale’s unprotected situation.”

"Confound them all, individually and collectively, for a pack of the most officious blockheads that ever invented a tale of scandal!" — cried I, losing all patience in my turn.

"Hey day — hey day! — you are breaking bounds with a vengeance!" cried the Doctor. — "There wanted only such a burst of fury to convince me that you know yourself to be in the wrong! — As to resenting that people should notice the pertinacity with which so fine a gentleman condescended to sink into eclipse three mornings per week, in an obscure humdrum retreat like Silwood Cottage, you might as well be angry with *me* at this moment, look, ye, for perceiving that nothing short of a love affair would induce you to put up with poor Peggy's paces and the company of a country apothecary, in order to get at news of his pretty patient."

"You are a plain spoken and fair dealing man, Dr. L.," cried I, with a sudden resolution; "and plain speaking and fair dealing will consequently go further with you than all the fine protestations I could devise. I *am* making a sacrifice to obtain information interesting to my feelings; and earnestly hope you will not withhold it. — But I swear to you as a gentleman, — do not smile — *not* as a *fine* gentleman, but as an honest man, — that Mrs. Greysdale never for a second interested my feelings otherwise than as a gentle pleasing woman, sister to the object of my affections."

"Honour bright?" cried the Doctor, evidently much surprised; "then upon my life, I'm both glad and sorry to hear it! But if you have nothing to reproach yourself with, that poor soul has been shamefully used. Greysdale, it seems, is a peppery fellow. — On finding that a man of your age and condition had been spending hours a day in his house, he naturally made inquiries. I believe I may congratulate you, Mr. Danby, on a charming reputation. — You are supposed, look ye, to be one of the most accomplished *roués* about town."

"Which might be resented by old Vavasour, to whose daughter I had been paying attention, but was clearly no affair of Mr. Greysdale's," said I.

"Pho, pho, pho! — Old Vavasour, as you call him, had only to interrogate the young lady, to know that you had

made no proposals of marriage to her, — that your attentions to *her* had been no greater than to her sister; and the mere fact of your making off, just as the husband was expected, explained all. — You can't deny it, Sir; you can't deny it. — You were always there, — I met you there a dozen times or so, myself."

"And were it a dozen dozen," said I, in a rage, — "how are you or how is any one to prove that I am speaking falsely, in my asseveration that my visits were addressed solely and exclusively to the unmarried sister?"

"Then why the deuce didn't you explain your intentions?"

Again I condescended to expound my scruples of conscience: to which the Doctor responded by a most provoking laugh.

"All I can say in reply is," said he, checking himself at last, "that it is a thousand pities so conscientious a young gentleman should not enjoy the full benefit of his virtues, in the estimation of the world. — Mrs. Greysdale's servants thought the worst of you; — and, either bribed or threatened by her husband, owned it. I was sent for, late one night. The poor creature had ruptured a blood-vessel. Her husband was gone off to town in search of *you*, — her father and sister were weeping over her: — and" —

"But surely," said I, profoundly indignant — "surely Miss Vavasour came forward with an avowal of my attachment to *her*?"

"Greysdale felt that most sisters would have avowed as much, in such an emergency, whatever might be the state of the case. A few plain questions settled his opinion. Are you going to be married to that fellow, Soph? — said he. — No. — Are you engaged to him? — No! — Did he ever propose marriage to you? — No! — Then it is clear he was making a blind of *you*, a fool of your sister, and a wretch of *me*!"

"But you do not mean to say that on such inconclusive grounds, the brute presumed to ill-use his poor, innocent, infirm wife?" cried I, with bitter indignation.

"Considering how little you profess to care for his poor, innocent, infirm wife, my dear Sir, you are tolerably zealous in her behalf!" said the Doctor, with a sneer.

"I do not affect to be savage," replied I. "The idea of *any* woman being exposed to injury on my account, would excite me as warmly."

"I do not mean to tell you that he threshed her (if that be what you understand by ill-usage). But some women are as tender in their feelings, as others in their frames; and that dear soft-hearted soul sank under the harsh language and cruel imputations of her husband! I had a hard matter, I can promise you, to get her round. — The first moment she was able to move, Greysdale made it a *sine qua non* of their reconciliation, that she should undertake never to see you again, — that she should instantly quit the neighbourhood of Windsor, — nay! that she should prepare to sail for Jamaica by the first packet."

"And they are literally gone, — and I have no means of vindicating myself and her!" cried I, leaning back in the detestable old gig — overcome by my feelings.

"Unless your niceness of conscience should determine you to undertake a sea-voyage and follow them!" chuckled the Doctor, who, I could see, had very little faith in my protestations. "If you really want to marry Miss Vavasour, you can't do better! Even if you only want to secure a pretty young woman from getting her head or heart broken for your sake, it would be no great sacrifice to marry Miss Sophronia: — for her father told me himself he would down with fifty thousand pounds on the nail, to any suitable husband! — And now Mr. Danby, I must trouble you to change places with John; for yonder green gate, look ye, is the end of my journey. — And so I wish you a very good evening."

I suppose it would have been hardly worth one's while to dirty one's fingers by killing an apothecary!

---

## CHAPTER IX.

A l'imitation de Fontenelle, il économisait le mouvement vital, et concentrait tous les sentimens humains dans le moi. Aussi sa vie s'écoulait elle sans faire plus de bruit que le sable d'une horloge antique. Quelquefois ses victimes criaient beaucoup, — s'emportaient; — puis, il se faisait chez lui un grand silence, comme dans une cuisine où l'on égorge un canard. — BALZAC.

I APPEAL to the sympathies of every gentleman even mode-

rately versed in the pains and penalties of a lady-killer's career, where

Vegnan li vaghi Amori  
Senza fiammelle ò strali  
Scherzando insieme pargóletti e nudi,

whether he ever heard of a fellow more unlucky in such matters than myself!

I admit that in my more sunny springtide of Cecilian gallantry, as the Anacreon of Téos and Anacreon of Ireland have united to phrase it, —

I had a pulse for every dart  
That love could scatter from his quiver,  
While every woman found in me a heart  
Which I with all my heart and soul did give her.

*Mais je valais mieux que ma réputation* ; — and though I frankly admit that, at the triumph of Catholic emancipation, my heart like the British Empire was divided into three kingdoms, — that of Sôphronia in the country, — Mariana in town, and Clémentine in Paris, — to say nothing of an unmentionable plurality of colonies, — I was utterly incapable of the heinousness of entertaining views upon too sisters at once. — Mrs. Greysdale never presented herself to my wildest imagination in other than the most sacred point of view!

I had respected her as she deserved, — with what result the Public has been apprised. — And yet the copy book morality of this specious world of plausibilities persists in asserting that “Virtue is its own reward!”

For the facts jolted out of the blunt lips of Dr. L —, by the rough pace of Peggy and rough questioning of his companion, were strictly correct. The family were gone, were by this time half-way to Jamaica; — rendered miserable for life by that reckless spirit of trifling with other people's happiness, which seemed fated to characterize my proceedings through life!

As to following them, according to the cool suggestion of the man of gallipots, I would not have undertaken such a sea-voyage to discover another New World, or lose sight of the Old one, — I scarcely know which were the stronger temptation! — But I wrote, — I wrote a long and eloquent epistle, — nay, *two* long and eloquent epistles; —



one addressed to the husband, the other to the father, — enclosing each a billet, neither long nor eloquent — but I flattered myself much to the purpose, entreating forgiveness of Annie and the hand of Sophronia, in terms expressive of the utmost penitence and passion. — I very much doubt whether the Right Honourable Secretary of State for the Colonies, ever affixed his official frank to a packet containing so vast a quantity of inflammatory matter.

All I hoped was that Greysdale might take my Epistle for Gospel. Meanwhile, as two months at least must elapse ere I obtained an answer, it was unnecessary to harass my feelings by continually dwelling on a subject so painful. — Confiding in the justice of Providence to enlighten Greysdale to his wife's merits and Sophronia to mine, I occupied myself with my official duties; and in the little family circle in Connaught Place, found occasion for the cultivation of those domestic virtues of which I might shortly stand in need.

As poor people provide themselves with teacups and bedsteads, by gradual provision, from the time they have matrimony in view, I thought it advisable to accustom myself to roast mutton and domestic table talk.

My brother seemed as anxious as myself that our circle should be re-united. It did not then occur to me, when I saw him so much more punctual than during Lady Ormington's lifetime, in his visits to Hanover Square, and so much more eager in his invitations to Lord Ormington to Connaught Place, that he had any fear of a mother-in-law; for the idea of Lord Ormington's marrying again was to *me* too preposterous to be entertained.

But Danby, aware that the world is made up of absurdities, was really anxious; for it appeared that Lady Harriet Vandeleur, on pretence of long friendship for the deceased, was besetting the widowhood of his father much as she had beset his own; only that instead of attacking the old lord with treatises on education, and yearnings after the maternal duties of a chaperon, she besieged him with pamphlets on the Catholic Question, and little three-cornered notes containing specifics for the rheumatism, — to say nothing of cadeaux of Angora flannel, and bottles of cajuput oil, and divers other delicate attentions adapted to a Corydon of threescore and twelve.

It was not, I am sure, that Danby entertained any interested impatience of a dowager on the estate; and had Lord Ormington chosen to choose wisely, would probably have advised him to comfort his declining years by the companionship of a suitable Abishag. But Lady Harriet who, after a *couleur de rose* flirtation with *me* had tried to get up a blue one with *him*, and was now attempting a quaker-coloured one with the head of the family; — Lady Harriet, who would allow him to call neither soul nor body his own; — Lady Harriet, who would quack him to death and elsewhere by her mountebankerries, moral, physical, and medical; — Lady Harriet, always in a fuss herself or the cause of fusses in others; — Lady Harriet, who chose to chop the chaff of life with a forty horse power engine, — and go sparrow-shooting with Perkin's steam gun, — Lady Harriet was not to be borne. Danby was quite right to dine with Lord Ormington, or invite him to dinner, three days in the week. There would not have been three months' life in the poor old gentleman after the honeymoon of such a waspish marriage.

Danby was careful to assemble at his table the old man's contemporaries for his recreation; and in this, I think, he was wrong. — It was very well for Alexander Pope to cling to the society of Martha Blount, because "his life was written in her mind," and vice versâ; or for Montaigne to say of Boëthius, "*je l'aimai parceque c'était lui — il m'aimait parceque c'était moi.*" But that which is good in love and friendship, is decidedly bad in acquaintanceship; — and all that came of Lord Votevilch, Lord Ormington, and Lord Falkirk meeting together to talk over old times was, that each said of the other in private after dinner, to any third person to whose button he could harpoon himself, — "Poor Ormington! 'T is a melancholy thing to see him so broken!" — or "Poor Falkirk! you will scarcely believe it, but I remember him a remarkably intelligent man!" — or "Poor Votevilch! how strange it is he should remember the most trivial thing that ever befel him, yet not recollect how many thousand times he has told one the same story!" — Each saw that the other was beginning to twaddle.

Sometimes, indeed, after a particularly good bottle of claret, the three old souls would grow jocular, — recur to

old times, — talk of the chimes at midnight, — and poke each other in the ribs à propos to Grassini or Mara, just as Sir Moulton Drewe, Lord Mereworth and I, were doing t'other night à propos to Fodor.

But the truth was that poor Votefilch *was* getting rather the worse for wear and tear; — or at least, *his* style of boring was *more* boring than that of the other two. — He had always the pretension of being a wiseacre, and seeing further than his neighbours; and when a man who wears the pretentious beard of a Sage begins to drivel, the spectacle is disagreeable.

Poor old Votefilch had been ruined by too good an education, and college honours. — Learning had been beaten into his head so very hard, that his head was as hard as a stone. It had taken at eighteen the shape it was to wear for life. His degree was a final measure. — Thenceforward, nothing was to be learned, — nothing *unlearned*; and he judged mankind at seventy, after wearing for years the mighty spectacles of office, just as he had judged them (after the most approved classical authorities) at Eton. There are various ways of being a pedant, — his was the most pernicious kind; for the man who has always a quotation from the ancients on his lips, expends his pedantry on others; whereas the man whose every idea is Patavinian, the whole form and pressure of his mind being shaped from the dead languages, inflicts his pedantry on himself. — Poor old Votefilch! He never could allow himself to laugh at Mercutio or Falstaff, for thinking of Aristophanes or Terence.

And now that this Temple of the Muses was cracking and giving way, the effect was ludicrous. He talked politics in the vein of Justice Shallow, and literature in that of Holophernes; snuffed about the destinies of Europe, and pomposed about invariable principles. — Yet in spite of Votefilch's senility, his name was one of the props of the Tory party. He was brought out on field days, as one of their great guns; though they knew his condition to be such that, in case of a discharge, the cannoneers must be blown to atoms.

I must say *that* for the Tories, — they *did* make it a point of conscience to support their aged and infirm. *Their* Anchises was not left to be roasted alive. — They were

pious sons to a superannuated father. The Whigs are very gentlemanly gentlemen; but one never saw *them* play the stork with their political grandpapas.

I should not have taken much heed of Votefilch's prosing, — though I confess that the decadence of a manly mind has a much more powerful effect upon *my* sympathies than the decay of a fair face, — but that he would pounce upon me as his victim. — The King knew better than to admit so decided a bore within miles of his august person; and could he have helped it, would never have had Votefilch nearer to Windsor than Staines. — But presuming upon having lorded it, that is secretary-of-stated it, over my youthful inexperience, he felt privileged to make me his speaking trumpet of communication with the royal ear.

"If you would take an opportunity, my dear Cecil, of impressing upon His Majesty's mind, that," — or "if you would seize some auspicious moment, my dear Danby, for making it clear to the King, that" — was sure to prelude some wrong-headed theory of his devising. — I, to be impressing things upon His Majesty's mind! — I, to be making them clear!

Why the only merit my conversation could possess in the estimation of a man like George IV., entitled to assemble round him the arch-wisecakes of his time, must have been its exemption from all connection with public business. — I was a *passe-temps*, — a relaxation, — an interlude, — a rattle to please him, — a straw to tickle; and by pretending to be nothing more than the thing I was good for, continued to the last to tickle and to please.

Ridentem dicere verum  
Quid ætat?

The great fault of favourites is presumption on their favouritism. Phædrus, Æsop, Pilpay, (which of them was it?) bequeathed us a clever example in the donkey who, jealous of his master's lap-dog, made himself disagreeable by jumping spaniel-wise upon his knee. — But if ever I write a string of apologues, *not* for the use of schools, but for the enlightenment of those dunces of

second childhood, so much sillier than the dunces of the first, — I will essay to prove that the petted lap-dog who pretends to utilize himself by wanting to carry panniers, is as great an ass as the other. — Every favourite has his specific purpose in his master's eye; and George the Fourth was quite as little in want of the political counsel of a Cis Danby as he desired to see the carrots and turnips of his Julienne figure at his dessert, or slices of pine-apple floating in his spring soup.

It was the want of perception to discover this, that finally sent Jack Harris to Coventry, by means of place and a peerage. — People are apt to blame the caprices of royalty, and talk of King this or Queen that throwing off their friends. — But no one takes into account the blunders and impertinences by which favourites — (for between ourselves, dear Public, to talk of friendship between sovereign and subject is every bit as absurd as for the Emperor of the Celestial Empire to call cousins with the sun and moon), the molestations and impertinences, I say, by which favourites cause themselves to be thrown over: — and it is not more unfair to find fault with a man for dismissing a drunken coachman, or a footman who chooses to give his notions upon parish rates instead of cleaning his plate, than to pass sentence of ingratitude upon a Prince who will not be flippantly answered, or bored with the political opinions of a Sir John Harris, K. A.B.C.D.E. F.G., &c., &c., &c.

One of those numskulls who presume to talk to the cobbler, and even the king of the cobblers, of his last, once congratulated Sir Walter Scott that he was about to visit Rome previous to the composition of a work embodying descriptions of the Eternal City.

"I shall finish it before I set out," was the reply of the mighty master; — "I can describe nothing on the spot."

The man of master-strokes, was aware that life and landscapes require to be viewed at a certain distance, in order to reduce the objects they contain to relative importance. — A fly crawling over one of the vast frescoes of Paul Veronese, might just as well attempt to play the critic upon its design, as A. or B. or C. to play the philosopher upon the event of yesterday. Time is the distance of moral life, — the perspective of the mind. — It is only

now, seated in my easy corner at Crockey's, or by my fireside in St. James's Place, that groupings come out before my mind's eye, and trifles combine themselves into events which, when passing before me, were mere dots and lines, scratchings and daubings.

Provehimur portu, terræque urbesque recedunt.

My brethren of the Household were then only men who came in or went out of waiting, at certain epochs. I forgot that they were historical personages. — It did not occur to me that all the finished finicality of that golden clockwork constituted an epoch; — a polished corner of the mighty temple of European civilization.

The first time it *did* occur to me was on noting the horror of the King at the prospect of finding a half-baked brick, or mass of unhewn stone placed next to it in the fabric. — Immediately after the Catholic Question, came Lord Blandford's notice of a motion for the consideration of Parliamentary Reform; — and though half the world seemed inclined to play Festus with the noble Marquis, accusing him of infirmity of mind or purpose, the other half trembled with the conviction that, within forty days, Nineveh would be destroyed. — We were at the beginning of the end!

"*Après nous, le déluge!*" is said to have been a favourite ejaculation of Louis XV., when admonished of the political reaction likely to occur in the times of his grandsons; — but let us not think so hardly of even one of the worst of the Lord's anointed, as to believe in the tradition. — Egotism, (or to write it puristically,) Egoism, in individuals a pitiful weakness, becomes a crime by regularization. The hardness of a royal heart must accumulate the impenetrability of thirty millions of nether millstones; and an Aldgate pump for the dispensation of Hydrocyanic acid, or an Epping Forest of Upas trees for public recreation, would scarcely afford a bitterer source of national calamity.

My august Master contemplated, I am convinced, with profound sympathy, the downfall of the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. Court physicians are not always soothsayers or sayers of sooth; — and while bleeding and blistering, or whispering hints of this symptom or of that, seldom

perceive the worm at the root which causes the branches of the royal oak to wax yellow and wither. — I shall go to my own grave with the conviction that the King I had the honour to serve, was chilled to death by the shadow cast before by the coming event of the Reform Bill; and that Sir Thomas Lawrence, the most loyal of royal limners, preceded him to the tomb on the principle invented by George Colman, who proved himself to be younger than the Prince because too polite a man to come into the world before His Royal Highness.

But I must not anticipate. — I was talking, if I remember, of the little importance I then assigned to my brethren of the Red Book," — whom, with the short-sightedness of human vanity and blindness of office, I regarded as permanent in their places as the giants in Guildhall; steady at their posts, albeit wooden giants, as the stone walls against which they are posted. — I liked most of them, — some to laugh *at* — some to laugh *with* : — I suppose no deeper motive need be adduced for the predilections of a coxcomb.

For one of them, for both these reasons, I entertained especial regard. — He was a pleasant sunshiny creature, equally ready to laugh or be laughed at, — some dozen years my junior, whom I remembered aforetime a page, and now recognized as a legitimate inheritor of the honours of Cecil Danbyism.

Frank Walsingham, — for though the Red Book and his tailor recorded him in their pages as the Honourable Francis Walsingham, I trust I may be excused from such nauseous particularity, — was one of those unhappy individuals born ruined, as one may say, — a nobleman's younger son! Like myself, he had been Etonized, — though not like myself, Christchurched and rusticated; — and was consequently as useless and expensive in his habits as his elder brother, the heir in tail to forty thousand per annum.

In his case, unluckily, half a dozen young Walsinghams interwened between the eldest son Lord Rotherhithe and my friend Frank : — so that an Honourable Charles was in the Foreign office, an Honourable Edward in the Church, and the others hiving up knowledge in the Temple, and elsewhere, learning to spell their own name, pre-

vious to introduction into official life. Frank, the ornamental one of the family, had literally nothing to trust to, in order to maintain the extravagant habits he was acquiring in his present appointment.

Neither he nor I, however, judged it necessary to be further sighted than his family and friends. — He was the pet of the court while in waiting, and the darling of the Exclusives when out of waiting; and never did I see a young fellow so general a favourite. He was merry without being noisy. A gleam of perpetual sunshine brightened his joyous eye; or if clouded by the moisture of a passing tear, the rainbow created by that rare refraction was indeed an emblem of peace. Man, woman, or child, — no one was proof against the fascinations of Frank!

He had but one fault, the consequence of this happy temperament and universal favour; — he was a *Cupidon déchainé*. People talk of a hard drinker, or desperate gambler, — Frank Walsingham was a hard flirter. It was no fault of his, — he was to the manner born. I have shown that *I* reached Oxford without anything amounting to an *affair de cœur*. But I am convinced that Walsingham must have coquetted with his nurse, and scribbled billet doux on the blank leaves of his Barbauld's Lessons.

Frank was as well qualified for his vocation by nature, as I, by art. — His long black lashes and large grey eyes acquired, when he chose, a look so sentimental, that in accompanying his sixpence to a beggar at the crossing with — “poor woman!” or a pitiful glance, — he seemed to be giving utterance to one of those exquisite sentiments seldom emitted in real life, or anywhere else, but the well-gilt pages of an octavo volume. — Even in the days of courtship, which preceded my days of courtiership, I wanted, I fear, the charming *laissez aller* of Walsingham. — *He* appeared to love for the sake only of the woman he loved, — I, for my own; — and so fervent was his ordinary manner, that he could make the agreeable quite as agreeably to half a dozen charmers in succession, as other men to the one idol at whose feet they exhale the whole incense of their soul. — Like a portrait whose eyes appear to follow the person who gazes upon it, his heart seemed always at the service of those who wished it. Because never in earnest, he always seemed



so. His gallantry was purely superficial, — the result of good spirits and good humour; and thus secure from the variabilities of deeper seated emotions, was ever ready for a flight.

I wonder, now, how I could be so fond of Frank, who was a phenomenal reduplication of myself. — Perhaps I fancied myself divested of a dozen of my superfluous years, by associating with a young fellow of twenty-two: — for I was arrived at the time of life when one shrinks from the company of one's contemporaries; and the round shoulders of Sir Moulton Drewe, or the bald crown of Mereworth, were disagreeable remembrancers of our progress in a career, of which it cannot be said that it leaves not a wreck behind.

Mereworth, by the way, attempted, after the fashion of the Cæsars, to disguise *his* baldness by a crown of laurels. — His speeches had almost as much influence in the Upper House as my brother's in the Lower; not as being of the same quality or calibre, — but because the sober, fluent, expository manner with which long habits of official life endowed the Earl, answered better with such an auditory than more impressive bursts of eloquence. — For the Peers of our time were not as the Peers of Chatham's: — and the country-gentleman aristocracy looked to Mereworth as its Solon.

His speeches I knew only by report, — the report of the Clubs, not reporters' report, for I am no speller of debates. — But it was by experience I found that a hogshead of heady port, such as Mereworth's light conversation, was the very thing to make one thirst for the high-flavoured Rhenish of Danby, or a glass of Frank Walsingham's sparkling Champagne.

Not to speak it profanely, it was poor Mereworth's small talk which enlightened me to the truth of the three St. James's Street degrees of comparative dulness, — "stupid, — damned stupid, and a Boodle."

Now, Lord Mereworth was of Boodle's!

## CHAPTER X.

In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead  
 Did squeak and gibber in the public streets;  
 Stars shone with trains of fire, dews of blood fell,  
 Disasters veil'd the sun, and the moist star  
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,  
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse. — SHAKESPEARE.

Ut in vitâ, sic in studiis, pulcherrimum et humanissimum existimo,  
 severitatem comitatemque miscere, ne illa in tristitiam, hæc in  
 petulantiam excedat. — PLIN. EPIST.

THERE is no moment in the history of a country, when, if a man with lungs strong enough to make himself heard, or diction vigorous enough to make himself read, — choose to announce by speech or pamphlet, that the “CONSTITUTION IS IN DANGER,” he may not terrify a considerable number of old women out of their wits, so as to obtain a vote of want of confidence in ministers, — or a shower of dutiful addresses from cathedral towns, acquainting the Sovereign that he has lost his head, or that the premier deserves to lose his’n.

But in every crisis thus arising, whether from the emancipation of Catholics or Niggers, — enfranchisements of Commerce or Conscience, — a strife of words, or a strife of Cræsususes, — whether Swing or O’Connell be the bugbear, or starvation or riot the order of the day, — the politeness of London life proceed unmolested. — Like a passing breath on any other surface of polished steel, society shines the brighter for that momentary obscurement.

Let whatever seditious meetings distract the kingdom, those of Epsom, Ascot, and Newmarket are true to their day; — and though the military be called out to save Bristol from burning, Wormwood Scrubs must have its field days, and Hounslow its reviews. — Exhibitions open, and Caledonian balls cut capers, let the Session rave as it listeth: — and even the autumn of that unquiet year was as diversified as usual by the petty pleasures which, by their agglomeration, render the lives of the great as distinctly brilliant on earth, as the Via Lactea in the sky. —

But that decency required the Danby family to wear its broad hems with discretion, neither Lord Ormington who had lost a wife, nor Cecil who was in expectation of obtaining one, need have looked graver than usual.

I had judged it necessary to place my confidence in my brother previous to despatching my formal proposals to Jamaica; and by him had been dissuaded from consulting his father. — In case of acceptance, Danby undertook to make such arrangements as would place the principal of the fortune secured to me by my mother's settlements, at my disposal; — in case of non-acceptance, there could be no occasion to annoy Lord Ormington.

For, to my great surprise, Danby, though approving my conduct under circumstances so peculiar, disapproved of the connection. He, so liberal in feeling, so enlightened in mind, encrusted by the prejudices of birth as a noble frigate by barnacles, repudiated the idea of the marriage of the heir presumptive of his family, with a nameless West-Indian, almost as much as that of his father with a canting intrigante.

I plead guilty to the weakness of finding my passion increase, in exact proportion to his disparagement of its object. I was proud of rising superior in liberality of views, to a man whose superiority I was forced to admit in all beside. Now that I am entitled to walk at a coronation, I think, as Danby thought *then*, — that providence purported the pairing of human pairs after their degree, as much as the pairing of inferior creatures after their kind; — and firmly believe the union of disproportional couples to be as unproductive of happiness, as those of the animal and vegetable creations are infertile of increase.

I am by no means ashamed of this natural progress of my opinions; for the human mind, like a Stilton cheese, ripens as it decays, and is valuable in proportion to its corruption. But I *do* blush to own how very tedious I found that autumn at Windsor, now that the ride to Sunning Hill had lost its attraction. I even grew impatient of my splendid slavery, to a degree that no one but the camarera Mayor of a Queen of Spain, after six months in the Escorial, could be made to understand. A gold fish panting in a glass bowl in the sunshine, must lead a pleasanter life than mine; heart-sick as I was of abiding

among those who neither spoke, looked, or acted in a natural way :—for “six weeks of varnished faces” is a state of primitive simplicity, compared with the falsifications of people, *plus royaliste que le roi* performing four and twenty hours of the twenty-four, a concert of falsettos, a never-ending *menuet de la cour* !

Our usual measure of mutual hypocrisies was just then out-Judassed by the antipathies arising from political dissensions ; which we were obliged to conceal like the Spartan’s fox under our cloaks, smiling only the more graciously for that inward begnawing.

At such periods as that last gasp of the expiring institutions of feudalism, the newspapers of the day suddenly start up in stature like Jack’s beanstalk, or Jack in the box. Like sea-birds, roosting quietly in crannies of the rocks in quiet weather, no sooner is the political sky overcast, than one finds the air beaten by sudden flights of gulls ; which, innocuous though they be, at such a moment appal like an omèn, portentous of raging waves and the wreck of some gallant vessel.

To fellows enjoying, like ourselves, the utmost beatitude of boredom, with only the vista of the Long Walk, and the flapping of the Royal Standard on the Round Tower to vary the daily scene, the leading articles of the day were so many field-pieces, through whose brazen mouths we made upon each other the war we dared not make through our own.

The puffing influence of newspapers upon the public mind, in modern times, somewhat resembles the closing and opening of the Temple of Janus in times of old. — We pin our faith in the country, in the month of January, upon an oracle we derided, in St. James’s Street, in the month of June. While domiciled in the centre of the Clubs, we split our sides at the inaccuracy of intelligence which, after the fifth milestone out of town, acquire an air of solemn authenticity : and at Windsor, not only believed in the lists of Departures and Arrivals, Bankruptcies and Insolvencies, but in the declarations of the Post that Britannia was smiling on a bed of roses, or of the Times that she was weeping over a bed of onions. — By the way, — I forget whether the Times were just then black or white, — Whig or Tory ; — the only fact indelible in my memory

concerning the good old Times, being a certain entry of one thousand pounds, much to its credit, in the account book of the Committee of Drury Lane Theatre, simultaneous with the début of the Times-honoured Edmund Kean.

"If any branch of the public administration were as infamously jobbed as the reviews," wrote the late Earl of Dudley to the Bishop of Llandaff, — "it must soon fall a victim to the just indignation of the world." — How could Dudley say so? — He who had been Foreign Secretary, — he, who had dabbled with the public journals, knew how well the world is pleased to be bamboozled by plausible print, or led by its long nose with the red hot pincers of editorial exaggeration!

I am sadly afraid this bald disjointed chat of mine purports only to disguise from myself and my readers, the mortifying suspense which caused the contemplation of my private affairs to be just then more distasteful than is usually the case with what concerns that personal pronoun, which ought, according to Pascal, to be obliterated from the vocabulary of every pious Christian.

I, — with Pascal's permission, — was, I admit, perplexed in the extreme by Sophronia's silence. — I admitted having acted towards her in the first instance with hesitation and reserve; but her utter disregard of my humble excuses was almost too severe a measure of retribution! — Week after week elapsed, — the arrival of two Jamaica mails was duly recorded in the ship news; — but not a syllable from any member of the Vavasour family! — I now began to persuade myself that my happiness was bound up in the prospect of my union with my Nea. I betook myself once more to Tommy's Bermudian odes; and on two occasions, contrived to get expresses sent off to the Colonial office, for the purpose of ascertaining not whether "sugars was ris," but whether any packet had been received for myself.

Alas! the answer only came too soon. — Early in January, — just as we were playing the fool with New year's gifts and Twelfth cake, — a packet sealed with black was placed in my trembling hands!

I am not sure but it might look striking and catastrophic, and am very certain that it would save me a world

of pain and pains, were I to fill up the remainder of the page with ranks and files of notes of admiration, or asterisks, after the fashion of Jules Janin and other oracles of the Prose-run-mad School: — those diminutive hippogriffs, who every now and then frighten the reading world into hysterics, like the bewildered astronomer who, with a fly in his telescope, announces that a fiery dragon is devouring the sun.

But however anxious to envelope in mystery the sorry figure I cut upon this occasion, I am afraid my strange eventful history was too widely bruited abroad by the loquacity of my friend the Egham apothecary, for the utmost hieroglyphicism of the press to avail me the redemption of my character.

I will tell my tale, therefore, in the simple language of an oracle far more oracular; premising that neither Greysdale nor his father-in-law deigned to notice the communications I had addressed to them.

The portentous letter sealed with black was from Sophronia, and couched in the following terms:

“ Greenville Plantation, Nov. 24, 1829.

“ When I tell you that a week only has elapsed since I laid the head of my sister in the grave, you will understand the cause of my delay in replying to your communication. You will also, I trust, comprehend the impossibility of a single expression of gratitude on my part, for the tardy justice you have done me.

“ In accusing you as the cause of my sister's untimely end, I do not pretend that we are altogether blameless. — When accident brought us acquainted, thirteen months ago, we ought to have known, we ought to have felt, that no good could arise from the cultivation of an intimacy, whose foundations were of sand. — Hard is it that my poor sister Annie should pay the penalty of my infatuation! Yet when I look to the prospects of my future days, I feel that, in the end, I, who was most to blame, shall have most to suffer! — For the principles in which I was reared had inspired me with profound contempt for the heartlessness of your class. I had been warned of their want of principle — their want of humanity. Yet with all my boasted wisdom, it needed only for one so specious as yourself to

dazzle me by refinement of manners and graces of person, to make me forget my father's lessons—to make me renounce my previous disdain!—With my own hands did I blindfold my better judgment;—and the result is such utter bankruptcy of the heart, as renders it difficult for me to address you even these hurried but necessary lines.

“Whether your proposals be dictated by a sense of mercy towards my sister, or regard for myself, it is now useless to inquire. — In marrying you, I should give my hand to her murderer. — That you could leave me, seeing, as I am persuaded you did, the sincere affection which you had spared no pains to call into existence, without one word expressive of your intentions, without one line from Paris to alleviate the affliction produced by your inexplicable absence, is a sufficient evidence of the self-possessed hardness of your nature, to convince me that, even if the dying bed of my sister did not oppose an insuperable obstacle to our union, I could not be happy as your wife.

“Oh! could you only know how much she had to suffer! Pure as the angels of Heaven, — Annie was exposed to all the obloquy awaiting the most infamous of her sex! — This, at least, was your doing. — *You* knew the habits of England, — the forms and usages of its society. — You saw our ignorance of the evil-interpretation to which we must be subjected by your visits. Yet you came and came again — with what intentions your own conscience can best apprise you; then, left us without a word, — flung us aside like a worn out garment; and when the brilliant Cecil Danby was heard of again, it was at the feet of another woman, — another, — and the wedded wife of another!

“At that moment, Sir, my sister had been all but sacrificed by the impetuosity of a man who loved her as his life, yet less than his honour.

“Pity him, and pity *me*! — Pity my poor heart-broken father, who is now sitting beside me, cursing the day in which he confided two daughters so young and inexperienced to the tender mercies of English society.

“Farewell. — Could I hereafter permit myself to recur to days that have proved so fertile a source of misery to me and mine, I might, perhaps, dwell with regret upon the sudden blighting of illusions, which for a moment pro-

mised to make this barren earth a world of happiness. But for the remainder of my life, and the sake of those to whose consolation I must devote myself, I banish the past for ever from my mind. — Imitate my example. — It will need no great effort for one so worldly as yourself to forget that you were ever acquainted with two fashionless, obscure, and nameless women, — one of whom is already your victim, — while the other prays, in the utmost sincerity of heart, for release from a life you have rendered wretched. — Again I say, farewell! S. V.”

I drew a very long breath after the perusal of this sad letter, — a breath so long as nearer to resemble a heavy sigh than altogether became the coxcombry of Cecil Danby.

Still, I was not weak enough to fancy myself so much to blame as Miss Vavasour harshly announced me. — No! I was not responsible for the infirmities of Mr. Greysdale's temper or Mrs. Greysdale's constitution. If the indifference of my reputation had lent a false colour to intentions pure and holy, the calumnious dispositions of the world had most to answer for. The brute of a husband who could so readily listen to slander of one of the most charming and chaste of women, would have found some other Cassio and some other Iago to move his detestable susceptibilities, had there been no Cecil and no gossiping Sunning Hill in the case. — Annie was evidently predestined to a miserable destiny, and early grave.

“After life's fitful fever,” and the yellow fever, “she slept well.”

It was clearly myself, — again begging pardon of Pascal, — who was most to be pitied. — It was *I* who was sacrificed on the occasion. A lovely girl, of exquisite sensibility, and the finest touch on the piano I ever heard, — a lovely girl, with sterling sense, and fifty thousand pounds sterling, admitted having been sincerely attached to me; yet now, positively rejected me as a husband, because she had a monster of a brother-in-law, and a sister of hectic constitution! — I confess I was bitterly mortified, and somewhat indignant; — a sincere mourner for the fate of poor Annie Greysdale, and a sincere mourner for my own.

My sole comfort consisted in the decisive manner in



which Sophronia and her family had cut short all further communication between us. — In such affairs, matters ought to be brought to a full stop. Commas and semicolons only constitute a painful and lingering death: and colons have been voted out of the syntax of Cupid, from the days of Richardson's novels. — Brevity, the soul of wit, should be the soul of courtship. — I like *my* love passages to be terse as Tacitus.

All that it was necessary to explain to Danby on the occasion was, that my suit was unprosperous. I knew he had too much delicacy to push his enquiries further: — and would naturally attribute my being out of spirits, to being out of humour, — the natural consequence of being in love: —

In amore hæc insunt omnia.

I remember, however, having the precaution to take Frank Walsingham with me to dine in Connaught-place on the day I had to announce this piece of intelligence to my brother, by way of check to any questions he might be disposed to hazard on the subject. And by the way, that was the first time, (evermore accursed be the day in the kalendar!) he ever saw my niece.

I might have spared my trouble. — Danby was engrossed by the event of the day, the sudden death of his friend Lawrence. — Perceiving that I was disposed to be incommunicative concerning the manner of my rejection, he was very willing to drop the subject, — and his attention was soon afterwards as anxiously directed towards the gradual inflammation of public opinion throughout Europe, as mine was engrossed by the dangerous illness of the King.

For it is not to be supposed that Danby, who, scarcely emerging from boyhood, had foreseen through the progress of European opinion the downfall of Napoleon, should have remained blind to that far more ostensible development of public feeling, which was communicating itself as by an electric chain from capital to capital, dethroning in France and Belgium the Sovereigns who attempted to repel with an iron hand the tremendous fluid which has its origin among the phenomena of Heaven; and unseating in England an administration which had flattered itself of being able to maintain, in the open day-

light of enlightenment and truth, the same hocus pocus deceptions, effective enough by the light of perfumed tapers and amid the velvet draperies of the court of an Exclusive King.

Danby had been among the first to unharness himself from the yoke of Toryism, the moment he perceived that its iron share was about to be driven over the naked breasts of the people.

Cassius from bondage did deliver Cassius.  
Nor stony tower nor walls of beaten brass,  
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron  
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit,

which, nurtured in childhood on rightful principles, acquires in manhood the force to perceive that they may be rendered, by untimeliness and misappropriation, principles of wrong! — But, as Seneca says, — *transcurramus solertissimas nugas!*”

## CHAPTER XI.

Within the hollow crown  
That rounds the mortal temples of the King  
Keeps death his court; and there the antic sits  
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp.—SHAKESPEARE.

*Si paulùm potes, illacrimare.* — HOR.

*Quantaque quàm parvi faciant discrimina motus :  
Tantum est hoc regnum quod regibus imperat ipsis !*

“REVENONS à notre Vvintsorre !” as St. Evremont, in his letters to the Duchesse de Mazarin, spells the name of our country-seat of royalty.

“*Pour qui les connait,*” says a clever French writer, “*les sentiers valent mieux que les grandes routes.*” “It is only by those unacquainted with them,” quoth Cecil Danby (a clever English writer), “that the highways of life are preferred to its by-ways.”

Of all wearisome expositions, the existence of the statue on its pedestal must be the most tedious: — of all human isolations, the eminence of a solitary throne the most depressing. — Even in health and happiness, a Sovereign, in

a state of single cursedness, is but a crowned Robinson Crusoe, and without his Friday. But when sick and sorry, and he begins to perceive that the sympathy of those around him is mere grimace, —

Earth's fruits grow bitter ashes in his mouth,  
And where he lays his head to rest, is strewed  
With scorpions!

George the Fourth was exceeding sorrowful, even before the commencement of his sickness. The death of a noble member of his household, an honest man whom he loved and whose end was envolved with events inexpressibly grievous to the King, combined with the languor of coming illness to depress his spirits; — seeing which, the melancholy frame of mind into which I had myself fallen, recommended me more than usually to his Majesty's favour.

I confess I was thoroughly discomfited. The unnatural excitement in which I had sought refuge from the shock of Lady Ormington's death, the worry produced by my long suspense touching the decision of the Vavasours, was giving way to a sullen consciousness that the better half of my allotted threescore years and ten had vanished, leaving me neither better nor wiser; — the more attractive gloss of mind and body wearing away, — unattached and unattaching, — standing alone,

In mezzo del cammin' della vità,

like Stonehenge, — in the midst of Salisbury plain, — a temple whose worship is obsolete, — desolation before, — dreariness behind.

No wonder that the King, gratified by the doleful expression of my countenance under such impressions, should prefer my attendance to that of others whom he better loved, but who for the lives and souls of them could not conceal their impatience of the dulness of the Castle under such circumstances.

I was with him much, — I was with him often. The world, however, I mean the plaything world that surrounded us, was mistaken in supposing me to be the depository of personal secrets, important as regarding the welfare of eminent individuals and the mighty schooling of mankind. — Had it been so, I should have made no

reference to the subject, — But it was *not* ; and I hazard the allusion only in proof that a single royal whisper is sure to be prolonged by such an endless iteration of echoes, that it might eventually come to pass for one of the orations of Demosthenes, or the seven hours' speeches of Lord Brougham.

I see that the Public is beginning to look inquisitive ; but were I to gratify its curiosity at the cost of propriety and honour, all I should have to relate would amount to little : — like those hieroglyphical inscriptions of Egypt, which, after two dozen centuries have devoted their valuable time and erudition to decyphering, and the expenditure of whole battalions of Savans and the extinction of a few hundreds of learned academies in the attempt, — are finally resolved into mysteries about as important as “ Ptolemy the son of Ptolemy dedicated this temple to the worship of the goddess Isis, in the year when the waters of the Nile rose two feet and a half above their usual level.”

I would fain pass over in respectful silence the illness and death of the King. — Monarchs who renounce the crown and sceptre for a hat and cane, are rarely successful in wearing their hat and cane with the ease of private life, or accomplishing its cordial friendships and domestic affections. The roar of the lion, though dormant, is too much an object of awe to be thoroughly forgotten ; nor can the hand entitled to sign a death-warrant or confer a pension, ever be pressed in the disinterested fervour of spontaneous attachment. — Some among us were sincerely concerned for the loss of a good master ; some, sincerely concerned for the loss of a good place ; — and not a few, deeply appalled by the substitution of funereal draperies and escutcheons for the festoons of joy and festivity, so recently adorning St. George's Hall. — I saw them terror-struck by the startling facts of sickness, — death, — embalment, — burial. — They had not imagined that any reality so real could touch the person of Majesty. — The last Sovereign numbered with the dead under that regal roof, had long been civilly deceased ; and more than one worldly trifler among my companions was so accustomed to the deceits of bulletins, and to believe that, as the Woolsack confers infallibility in law, the Pre-

sidency of the College must confer infallibility in physic, that they would not believe his Majesty to be in danger, till the proclamation of King William. With such people, Time and Death are allegorical things, good to figure in marble on a stately monument with a scythe and hour-glass in their hands; and though admitting kings to be "*sigillatim mortales, cunctim perpetui*," they believe *the* King to be immortal.

The 26th of June arrived, and George IV. was released from suffering; — the 15th of July arrived, and Cecil Danby was released from servitude. — The vail of the temple of worldliness was rent in twain!

Posterity, — who sits like Justice Midas in his arm-chair, deciding upon the merits of Pol and Pan, — assigning to sovereigns the place they are to occupy in Lord Mahon's continuation of Smollett's continuation of Hume, and the panegyrical discourse of the waxwork showman in Westminster Abbey, — must decide whether the hearty cheers which hailed the substitution of a flag that had braved the battle and the breeze for the embroidered folds of the purple banner of Pleasure, had any deeper origin than the enthusiasm which invariably accompanies the semi-serious cry of "*Le Roi est mort — vive le Roi!*"

For in the commencement of every new reign, as in the dawn of a new day, the hopes of the public rise, lark-like, warbling and carolling to the skies; — while the close of a reign resembles the evening twilight, where the melancholy bat, Disappointment, is alone astir; preparing to retreat to the rafters of the old barn of Time, to fold its leathern wings in darkness and the shadow of night.

One thing is certain. — The domestic position of the new King threw open wide the palace gates, not alone to the poms, and dignities, and decencies of a female court, — but to the manifestation of those domestic affections which, by uniting the sovereign and his subjects in a more intimate union, diminished the isolation of the throne. Windsor Castle became an ant-hill of Fitzclarences, and

One touch of nature made the whole realm kin.

The jealousies of the aristocracy had laid in a prodigious stock of contempt for the illegitimate family of the King. But such was the kindliness and personal merit

of those pré-sentenced to unpopularity, that the moralists forgot their cut and dry cant of the mischief of precedents in such cases; and emulated the indulgence of a Queen, whose virtues entitled her to exercise, in this instance, one of the fairest prerogatives of her sex.

What a curious transition in the history of English palaces, from the hyper-refinement of the most heartless of epochs, to the cordial simplicity of the new court! — It was so long since the voices of children and the glee of young mothers had resounded in those gilded galleries, that nature seemed to take delight in chasing out the formal train of art from the precincts wherein she had so glaringly predominated.

Never shall I forget the impression produced upon my mind when, a month or so after the decease of my royal master, on waiting upon the King to deliver up certain papers which it was indispensable should pass from my hand to his own, I saw a joyous train of nurses and children disporting on the sunny slopes; — and heard the natural intonation of human voices, with

Ladies' laughter coming through the air,

where formerly the hum of the honey-bee was alone audible. — People laughed and talked and walked *there* as elsewhere. — I could scarcely believe myself at court!

At the close of my audience, the King asked me to "take my mutton with him!" I stood transfixed. The ceremonial of embalming at which I had here been forced to preside, did not half so forcibly convince me that Kings were as other men, as this apostrophe. If the extreme courtliness of the last court were excessive, I am not certain that this reverse of wrong was right. — But between the too much and too little pageantry of courts, let Lord Chamberlains and Lord Mayors' fools determine. — That day, I made my parting bow to Windsor. — I doubt whether the Castle have since beheld an obeisance executed with a thousandth part so much urbanity and grace.

Already, the movement mania was beginning. — Scarcely had the echoes of the Park and Tower guns ceased over the grave of George IV., when the *mitraille* of Paris became audible. — The whist and shooting parties of Charles X. were strangely interrupted by an

outburst of popular indignation such as might well renew the famous dialogue between Louis XVI. and the Duc de Liancourt — “*Monsieur le Duc, c'est donc une révolte ?*” — “*Non, Sire ! — c'est une révolution !*” — But what importance has that fearful word revolution since acquired in the ears of Kings ! — However, on this occasion, Regicide France condescended to take example from Protestant England ; and Charles X. was dismissed as contemptuously as James II.

It was not, however, the fortunes or misfortunes of Charles X. that now distracted my attention. Nothing could exceed my embarrassment at the coolness with which the Duchesse de Dijon, on arriving in England with the La Bélinayes, in the suite of the royal family, wrote to announce her intention of a visit to Ormington Hall.

To propose such a visit to Lord Ormington, even had I been in Danby's position and he in mine, would have been totally useless ; — for to own the truth, the deportment of the emigrants of the Court of Louis XVIII. towards their English protectors, was of a nature to account for the very small number of them who judged it expedient to follow the royal family a second time into exile. — But for *me* to request the hospitality of Ormington Hall for one of the most objectionable accomplices of the levities of my unfortunate mother, was wholly out of the question.

I was obliged to project a new tour to the Continent to get out of the scrape of doing the honours of England to people who little deserved them. — But I must do this justice, *en passant*, to poor Clémentine, (to whom I hastened to offer the succours really at my disposal,) that the most devoted of wives could not have borne her reverses more heroically. — Redoubling in respect towards the man whose name she bore, lest others in his adversity should render him conscious of his personal insignificance, — though doubtless secretly blushing for the incapacity which, in the recent crisis, had distinguished the conduct of the most idiotic aide de camp of the most *cretin* of masters, she never allowed a syllable of blame to escape her lips. — “*Vive le Roi — quand même !*” — was still her device ; — exemplifying that gallant but blind and dangerous loyalty of the old aristocracy, which tended only to

harden the hearts and weaken the throne of the elder race of Bourbons.

I spent a few hours with the family, facilitating the arrangements of their journey to Holyrood ;— and among other inquiries relative to the startling events of the Three Days, which had not yet achieved the honour of being called glorious, ventured to ask whether my portly friend Monsieur le Comte de St. Gratien were among the captured fugitive Ministers of the abdicated King ?

Clémentine replied by a wondering smile :— her mother, the Duchess, by an inquiry where I had been living to be thus ignorant of the state of Parisian men and things.

“Are you not aware,” interrupted Madame de la Bélinaye, “that poor St. Gratien shares with Judas Iscariot and Prince Talleyrand the palm of arch-treachery, — and that he is surnamed the harbinger of revolution ? — Two months ago, he retired from the administration : — and was one of those who proceeded the other day to Neuilly, to propose the throne of France to the Duke of Orleans.”

“As vicegerent of the kingdom, of course, a *fidei-com-mis* for the Duc de Bourdeaux,” said I ; — “perhaps the best service that could be rendered by so faithful a servant of the King.”

Madame la Duchesse de Dijon took an impatient pinch of snuff !

“Should you pass next winter in Paris, mon cher Monsieur Danby,” interrupted Monsieur de la Bélinaye, in a piteous tone, “instead of seeing the head of St. Gratien fall with those of Polignac, Peyronnet, Chantelauze, and Guernon-Ranville, you will find it crowned with a tri-coloured cockade, — and your friend Madame la Comtesse, in all probability, a lady in waiting !”

“No, no ! you do her injustice !” said I — recalling to mind her devoted attachment to Madame ; — adding to myself, in an under tone, — “*faut il que cette pauvre Thérèse soit toujours incomprise !*”

I had but one more inquiry to make ; — and I confess it was not without the hope of discovering further treachery among those who ought to have rallied round, not the *panache blanc*, but the tri-cornered hat of the Jesuit King, instead of the tri-coloured flag of his opponents.



"*Et ce cher Vicomte ?*" — said I, — inferring that, as Clainville was not of their party, he was of the *partie libérale*.

"*Ah ! ce pauvre Vicomte !*" — cried La Bélinaye, shrugging his shoulders, "He was very unfortunate !"

"Unfortunate, indeed !" — responded the Duchess, with another pinch of snuff. — "He who might have been killed at the Trocadero, — or even the other day in the attack on the Louvret, the Carrousel, the Palais Bourbon, as others, were, — he, who might have fallen *en bon gentleman* on the Place de Louis XV. by a musket ball, as his father did before him by the guillotine, — was actually slaughtered by the lowest vulgar of the populace, while leaving the Marché des Innocens with despatches for the Hôtel de Ville !"

"Despatches which he had undertaken to convey in my place, — for it was to me they were originally intrusted by the Duc de Raguse !" — faltered the Count in a dolorous voice. — "But he was always the most obliging fellow in the world ! — He would have sacrificed his life for me or Clémentine. To be sure, he was our cousin-german."

"Only figure to yourself, *mon cher Monsieur Danby*," resumed the Duchess, "that the bodies of the victims were interred indiscriminately on the spot where they fell ; — and that the Vicomte de Clainville, representative of a *noblesse* of the first crusade, — is lying *pêle mèle* with a horde of *forts de la Halle* and *gamins de Paris*, in a common grave, over which the butterwomen of Paris will spread their filthy merchandize, for centuries to come. — *Ce brave garçon*, — *ce pauvre Vicomte*, — *cet excellent Clainville !* — *Quel sort — quelle infamie !*"

While listening to all this, I stole a glance towards Clémentine ; and perceived that, though silent, she was much paler than usual.

I had not before noticed that she was attired in family mourning.

## CHAPTER XII.

Upon a full sea are we now afloat,  
And we must take the current while it serves,  
Or lose our ventures. — SHAKESPEARE.

Finesse, artifice, mystère,  
Détours, vaine subtilité, —  
Politique en chose légère,  
Ménagée avec gravité.  
Soit à parler, soit à se taire  
Air de suffisance affecté. — ST. EVREMONT.

AND thus had the prognostications of my brother been categorically fulfilled! — The boa constrictor *had* roused itself from its lethargy to crush the despotism of old Europe within its coil. The stillness *had* given way to a storm, whereof the thunders still growled in the distance, while the foreground was encumbered by livid heaps of dead.

France was awake, — Belgium was awake, — and their sovereigns were fugitive before the face of the people. England was now awaking. — What was to be the result?

The Tory party declared its incompetency to defend the throne, by advising the King to refrain from a promised visit to the good city of London. Riots ensued — further dangers impended; but the good feeling of William IV. and good sense of the Duke of Wellington ceded to the pressure of the times, — and the capital was preserved from insurrection.

Such was the preamble of the Reform Bill. Of the personal refinements and mental acquirements of the King, it would require the tongue of a Sir John Harris to speak in terms of laudation. But let the honours of a warm heart and conscientious mind abide with the memory of William IV.; by whose concessions, the country was secured from a revolution, and the cause of Civil and Religious Liberty advanced more surely than by the precipitate enfranchisements of all the revolutions in the world.

I hate to scribble about politics. — Nine days in ten, one's dinner is spoiled by hearing them discussed; — and the wisdom of parliament, (like ghosts, a thing more talked about than seen,) might really spare one the trouble

of speechifying on paper. Before, however, I resign my crowquill once more for a plume plucked from the downy pinion of Cupid, let me be permitted to say that I rejoiced heartily in the change of men and measures.

Almost every change of Ministers effects some good. The Constitution, if allowed to walk always with the same leg foremost, shuffles on and makes little progress. It is only by an alternation of the right leg and the left, the Whig party and the Tory, that the body politic is held in equilibrium !

A man was now lord of the ascendant, who was accounted lordly even among lords. Lord Grey, like his royal master, was a happy accident. So long as he retained the helm of Government, the baffled Tories had no plea for raising an anti-democratic panic, — nor could the Exclusives whisper the damnatory epithet of "vulgar," which they applied without ceremony to the new Court. The Earl was too fine a specimen of the liberalized noble of the nineteenth century, to run any risk of involvement in the rabble of the radicals. — To carry the Reform Bill, it was indispensable to throw dust in the eyes of those possessed of privileges to renounce ; and the dust thrown by the hand of so well-bred a man was thrown with such stern suavity, if one may use the expression, that they mistook the refuse of the street for sands of gold.

Among those in whom this dust, whatever its quality, produced decided ophthalmia, was Lord Ormington. Thwarted through life in almost every bent of his nature, unable among the free-and-easy habits of the times he had survived to, when even the most pig-tailed of elderly gentlemen are exposed to the bantering of their coterie and badgering of their club, to maintain the moated and ramparted reserve of his earlier years, he was like some old fortified town, whose walls have been plucked down and fosses filled up and planted, — looking grimly cheerful and formally easy through the young plantations growing up under its venerable nose.

One by one, all the strongholds of his Toryism had been demolished by the powerful arm of his son. — It was like the devaluation of some venerable traveller in a farce. First his coat was torn away, — then his doublet, — eliciting convulsive grimaces from the victim, and laughter

from the spectators. And now, to have to utter the "ay" which was to place his darling borough of Rigmarole in Schedule A!—Since the days of Abraham, no such sacrifice had been demanded of a parental heart!

Danby however was triumphant; and as Ariosto says,

Fu il vincer sempre mai laudabil cosa  
Vincasi o per fortuna o per ingegno.

His father's conversion, and his own magnificent speech, were among the memorabilia of Parliamentary Reform; and though Lord Ormington's old protégé Droneby, who had been long mitred, passed his old patrons with a formal bow, or swept his lawn sleeves disdainfully passed them in the House, I trust both father and son had strength of mind to survive the animosity of the Right Reverend grandfather in God.

I cannot enter into the position or sentiments of such a man as my brother. To be the head of a class, as I was, is a very different thing from being the leader of a party; and though my inherent self-reliance never left me half a second in doubt as to the eligibility of my plans or rectitude of my principles as the first dandy of my day, — I sometimes feared that even my brother's firmness might not be altogether proof against the insolence of those former colleagues, who denounced him as a recreant and a renegade.

Toryism is but the principle applied to politics which in philosophy lighted the fagots for Galileo. — Those fellows would have burnt my brother if they could. They *did* burn him in effigy. But burning in effigy constitutes, I believe, one of the indispensable honours of political martyrdom, preparatory to canonization.

If these brewers of mischief could have had their will, they would have raised the waters of strife so high in the land, that the Ark of Reform should eventually find no peaceful Ararat whereon to anchor.

I was prevented from realizing my projected trip to the Continent that winter, by the unquiet state of England. Lord Ormington's Lancashire estates were in a most disturbed condition; and Danby, between his attentions to his father and the exigencies of the Session, was compelled

to absent himself so frequently from home, that he was desirous I should take up my residence in Connaught Place. He was aware of my objections to Hanover Square.— It was perhaps as a pretext to afford me a comfortable home, in lieu of the noble one I had lost, that he suggested the plan as an act of grace towards himself.

Jane was now in her sixteenth year, and only nominally under the jurisdiction of a governess. — She took the head of the table, unless on occasion of political dinners; and adopted from earliest childhood as her father's companion and friend, was as conversational and well bred, as she was pretty and pleasing. — Among the frequenters of my brother's house, her prettiness and pleasingness went for little. The contemporaries of Lord Ormington cultivated as guests by Danby for his father's sake, — the artists and men of science and letters whom he protected, — even the party men with whom he was inextricably amalgamated, took no further thought of a little girl in a white frock, than my poor mother's dowagers in Hanover Square used to take of the stuffed figure of Bihiche; — and I remember that, one day when Frank Walsingham, having called to fetch me to dinner at White's, and found Jane sitting with me over the fire, made some inquiry about her age, I felt annoyed at being forced to admit that I had a niece so nearly approaching towards womanhood!

I was beginning to grow touchy on the score of age; and though aware that young Chippenham, Mereworth's son, was entered at Oxford, and though, alas! certified by a still more disagreeable remembrancer of the follies of my Foreign office days that nearly twenty years had elapsed since I became a man of wit and fashion about town, I still chose to believe myself, what the eyes of the more discriminating sex assured me I remained —

Beau, brillant, leste et volage,  
Aimable et franc comme ou l'est au bel age!

I was still more angry when, at intervals, Frank chose to return to the charge.

"Child, if you will," he was pleased to say, in allusion to Jane, — "but she has all the sense and feeling of a woman. — It is the most highly finished miniature I ever beheld!"

"Jane is a good, little, quiet thing," said I, waspishly, "who, half a dozen years hence, may be worth looking after. Miniatures, my dear Frank, are at best trivial things. Come with me, and I will show you one of the finest gallery pictures of the day."

And I took him with me to Lady Brettingham's, whose husband had been batched in the last baking of baronets, in gratitude for his friendliness to the Catholics and enmity to Boroughmongers,—as per haunches of venison and saddles of mutton demonstrated.

Through all that stormy session Lady Brettingham had been progressing into importance, by the steady support afforded to the Liberal party, by the excellency and frequency of her political dinners.—"Give me a spot to stand on," said Archimedes of old, "and I will move the world."—Give me a good dinner table to talk at twice a week, and I will persuade any man, not of Clumber-ous extraction, out of his opinions.

On entering the House of Commons, or even sitting down to a ministerial banquet, a public man puts himself on his guard,—stoppeth his ears with wax like the wise Ulysses,—and like a stock-broker in a swell mob, thrusts his notes into an inner side-pocket.—But to a well furnished, well established house, like that of Sir Julius and Lady Brettingham, he comes unarmed;—he feels privileged to resign himself to the enjoyment of excellent entrées, and the wine so much more likely to be meritorious when the master is his own taster, than where one lies at the mercy of the clerk of the cellar.—Smiled at by her Ladyship,—coaxed by Sir Julius,—diverted by the wit and humour of a Mr. Merriman, whom he little suspects to be the Editor of a leading journal, the country member listens without mistrust.—Spectacles are adjusted to his eyes, nay, the operation of couching is performed so pleasantly, that he is not aware of it; nor is it till the question comes to be debated, a fortnight afterwards, and, brightened by the arguments which have been seething and fermenting in his mind, like Sir Francis Wronghead in the play, "he cries *ay* when he ought to have cried *no*,"—that the influence of a Brettinghamian dinner becomes apparent.

"Let who will make the laws of France, so I have the

making of her songs!" — said one of those best aware of the influence of wit over a French imagination.

"Let who will give the law to London," say I — "so I am allowed to invite her to dinner." — The stomach is her vulnerable point; and for one measure carried at the point of the bayonet in England, fifty have been enforced at the point of the spit. — The truth is that our domestic cookery is so very humdrum, — and our plain cooks are so very plain, that any digression into a fairer field becomes dangerously attractive. — Such viands as those of Sir Julius and Lady Brettingham were fatal to the anti-reformers, as the insane root of Egypt to the legions of Antony.

I am not sure, by the way, — for I love to dive into the root of a mystery, — whether there may not have been niching malicho in John Murray's ten thousand editions of Mrs. Rundell! — All the abominations concocted in those peppered and salted pages, may have been, after all, but a profound Metternichism of the Tories to expose the appetites of the nation to the temptations of official gastronomy! — An Emperor of China would perhaps condemn the designing bibliopole to be hashed into small pieces and tossed up in a ragoût, for a crime of this nature, so far more heinous than the importation of opium; for no one can doubt that, after going through a severe course, or three courses of Mrs. Rundell, Cincinnatus himself would sell his birth-right, or his borough, for a mess of Potage à la Reine.

Danby was too apt to underrate the influence of such party accessories. Like all really great men, Danby despised that which was ingenious in action, as he avoided all that was paradoxical in discourse. — There was not a cranny in his brain, — a fibre in his heart, — for anything but TRUTH. — It was the simplicity of an Ionic Temple!

Frank Walsingham, as I expected, was amazingly taken by the pleasurable of the Brettinghams' house. — He had not yet travelled, and consequently was not aware that it presented only a pale imitation of Parisian society. Luxury and grace employed as arabesques and gilding to disguise the unsightliness of political and official life, constituted its charm. — One met cleverer men there than at other pleasant houses; and prettier women, than at other bureaux d'esprit.

I was puzzled to guess what induced Lady Brettingham to welcome my friend Frank with such very open arms; for we were alike obsolete as a full bottomed wig, without so much influence *now* at the Pavilion or in Stable Yard, as would have promoted a turnspit. — But after listening twenty minutes to the tone of her bland cajolery, — of which cypher, experience had furnished me with the key, — I saw that he was a mere vestibule to the door at which she wanted to knock; his brother, Lord Rotherhithe, being one of the sunken rocks over which the Brothers of the Trinity House of Reform, had set up a buoy.

Rotherhithe was at present a dark horse: — no one as yet quite understood Rotherhithe. He was one of those who are clever enough to hold their tongues; and a silent bird enjoys in the aviary the benefit of a doubt whether his notes, if he *did* choose to sing, would be those of the nightingale or the crow. — He was supposed to think the more for talking so little; and his party were sadly afraid that all his thinking might end in having an opinion of his own. — There was a sort of cool intractability about him that excited their alarm. — A man who fancies himself wiser than his neighbours, is apt to be tempted by the charm of prohibition, to break out into opposition to his family politics: and whereas all the Walsingham tribe were stiff anti-reformers, there was every probability that the one word which Rotherhithe *did* allow himself to speak, might afford important support to the Liberal interests.

Such a piece of proselytism was worthy the hands of Lady Brettingham. Rotherhithe was the sort of fellow I detested. — I hate a silent man. — Much has been said of the weariness of talking to the blind; but what is the vacuity of a countenance irresponsive to your efforts, compared with the reserve of a soul that gives no sign of sympathy?

I thought it right, however, to afford some hint to Frank of the nature of Mariana's projects; for it is a pardonable malice to circumvent the manœuvres of a woman who has been insolent enough to take one for a dupe.

Walsingham was too much in conceit with himself and the world to be angry with either her or me.



"Is *that* her line of policy?" said he, laughing. "Then, by Heaven, I could find it in my heart to gratify her by bringing Rotherhithe (against whom I have just now a brotherly grudge for making my father preserve his pheasants against his younger sons), to her house. — Ro. has a nervous horror of having salt dropped upon his tail, either in matters of love or politics. — He is terribly afraid of being swallowed alive as a *parti*, — or by a party. — It would be great fun to see the vote-hunt. — I should like to get Landseer here to paint it: — a new edition of terrier and rat."

"At all events, our fair friend has good white teeth to show," said I. "Do not, however, punish your brother at the risk of a vote to the good cause. If you think him undecided, bring him rather to Connaught Place. — Danby seems to possess the magic power of solidifying a morass by planting his foot upon it. — I hardly ever saw a timid mind resist the closeness of his reasoning, or the perspicuous simplicity of his language. — Nothing vague, — nothing inconclusive. — By assigning bounds to a question, he is able to elucidate every obscure corner, so as to satisfy the misgivings of people whom the mysterious nature of an argument ending in the clouds, overpowers with nervous terror."

"Your arguments, my dear fellow, are almost too cloudy for me!" cried Frank, laughing. "But if you know your own brother, you don't know mine; and I can tell you that if I wanted to assist the Reform cause with his vote, I would tie him down for the next six weeks to the society of my father's set, — who would probably argue him into opposition."

I could almost understand this myself; for I swear there were moments when the truisms of that most common-place of common place-men, my old friend Lord Mereworth, inclined me to inscribe on my banner, "Let Old Sarum flourish." — Mereworth was one of those very slow coaches who resume every question from the epoch of the deluge; and waste one's time and attention 'by proving what nobody disputes: a man born a century too late.

Pereant qui nostra ante nos dixerant!

An acquaintance of some standing with my brother had

luckily somewhat enlarged his political views; and the solemn respectability of his air, diction, and condition, consequently rendered him valuable as a stone roller to smooth the surface of the noble road projected by abler engineers.

I spent a good deal of my time at his house in Grosvenor Square. — It was one of those clockwork establishments which do credit to the orderliness of the Order. — The early musical predilections of the Mereworths seemed to have trained them to habits of keeping time and tune; for the punctuality of their house and engagements was regulated with the exactness of crotches, quavers, and demi-semiquavers. Not a variation in their hours, or epochs of coming to town or leaving it, from the days when I yachted with them in the Mediterranean, till now.

It was perhaps the monotonous tranquillity of these modes of life which caused the hours, thus admirably disciplined, to pass unfelt over the head of Lady Mereworth. — The serenity of nature which had rendered her eyes so inexpressive twenty years before, at Maybush Lodge, caused them still to wear the same invariable and mildly pleasing expression. — Mereworth was already a middle-aged man, — bald and prosy; — I, worse, — for I did not love to show myself in public without a considerable expenditure of time and Delcroix in getting up. But Lady Mereworth looked almost as young as ever; —

Time had not thinned her flowing hair;

her skin was still transparent as porcelain; — her brow still smooth as the verse of Rogers. Just then, when almost every house one entered was rabid with politics, — a porcupine's nest of contending principles or interests, — it was agreeable enough to take refuge in that sleepy drawing-room of hers: and find her always seated on the same soft sofa, with the same soft smile, and the same soft worsted work in her lap. It was like contemplating a *Calm* by Vandervelde, after the billowy, foaming, frothing, rock-rending, pine-splitting cataracts of Ruysdael; — a moral lullaby, — a *Riposo* in a land of Canaan.

In Connaught Place, they talked too much sense for me; elsewhere, too much nonsense. — Lady Mereworth possessed a sort of mezzo termine evenness of discourse, that called for no exercise of thought or feeling to attain

its level, — the female counterpart of Mereworth's sober mediocrity. — What a charming companion for an indolent man in sunny weather! — What can a fellow desire more, after being chattered to death in the House, or at his club, — distracted by the rattle of a dice-box, or drumming of an orchestra, than to find a perpetual smile and gentle voice welcome him to a snugger, where not a discordant sound or sight has leave to enter!

I no longer wondered that my friend Mereworth had turned out so domestic a man. — They had no daughters to engage the attention of the Countess; — their sons were at school; — there was nothing to divide with him the attention of

The kind fair friend by nature mark'd his own.

Deeply impressed by the charm of his domestic sanctuary, I was never weary of returning to the contemplation. I used to make my appearance in Grosvenor Square every day, at the same hour, to enquire whether Mereworth were gone down to Boodle's or the House; — and usually remained listening to his wife's answer in the affirmative, till, an hour or two afterwards, her carriage was announced. — It seemed a matter of course that I should come. It seemed a matter of course that everything in that house should become a matter of course. — My daily visits were only a portion of the routine of the establishment. — The porter started up to open the door the moment my cabriolet entered the square. In a very short time, I dare say, the door would have opened of itself.

I was not molested by much rivalry. Lady Mereworth was too indolent and too home-staying to disturb herself with keeping up the system of morning visiting that renders many houses in London as public as a bazaar; nor was there much attraction in a gentle quiet woman of seven and thirty, to the dashing legions of guardsmen, or other idlers of the same capacity; — I had it all to myself. — I was amazingly happy!

How different the even tenor of a gentle sentiment like this, from the distracting alternations of a passion the very quintessence of which resides in sighs and torments, — *spasimando spasimar*, — which finds no rhyme for heart but dart or smart; — a zephyr to a sirocco, — the Bay of

Naples to the Bay of Biscay, O! — “*Ut maris tranquillitas intelligitur, nullâ, ne minimâ quidem, aurâ fluctus commovente: sic animi quietus et placatus status cernitur, quum perturbatio nulla est quâ moveri queat.*”

I trust my readers are conscious of the clever circum-bendibus by which I have contrived to make it manifest, without actually announcing so unpleasant a fact, that the dangerous vivacities of Cecil the Coxcomb were subsiding; —*i. e.*, that I had attained my fortieth year.

I shall be extremely obliged to the junior branches of my readers to refrain from a smile. — Walter Scott did not become a poet till he was eight and twenty; — it would be invidious to specify which of the mighty conquerors of the day, became a Lovelace at forty-two!

### CHAPTER XIII.

For Hope grew round me like the living vine,  
And fruits and foliage not my own seemed mine.

COLERIDGE.

Sans besoin et sans abondance,  
J'oserais dire sans desirs,  
Je vis ici dans l'innocence  
Et d'un sage repos fais tous mes plaisirs.

ST. EVREMONT.

THERE are various kinds of solitude in this world, — Childe Harold indited two immortal stanzas, which may save one the trouble of being prosy on the subject: — and Cecil Danby accordingly says ditto to Lord Byron.

It may not be amiss, however, to add, for the benefit of those who delight in circumstantiality, that “amid the hum, the buz, the shock” of the Reform Bill, Lady Mereworth and I were as completely alone in our Cyclades in Grosvenor Square, as Juan and Haidee. — Mereworth was a close prisoner in that lordly King’s Bench which has no rules to lighten the bondage of its captives; and by virtue of a plea as valid in love as law, “*de non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio.*”

I sincerely trust my conscientious Public is as much startled by the word *LOVE* let slip by my pen, as I was

myself when it was first suggested to my imagination by the intermeddling of my friends.

People who attain untimely maturity are, I am convinced, subjected to those caprices of nature which every now and then cause an apple tree to re-blossom in the month of September, or a venerable gentleman of eighty-four, to cut a second set of teeth. — I, who had been so parlous a villain at twenty, so corrupt, so heartless, was budding forth into child-like simplicity in my middle age. — I could almost fancy single-mindedness an infectious disorder, and that I had caught it of the Mereworths.

For I vow to Madame la Comtesse de St. Gratien, or any other of the immaculates, that I had been paying daily visits in Grosvenor Square for three months or more, without one evil thought or project; — perfectly sincere in assuring myself, every night when I wound up my watch, that I had spent a very pleasant day, and entertained “a sincere regard for Mereworth and his wife.”

Everybody must remember the tedious length of that Reform Bill Session; and the sojourn in town necessitated by the Coronation that was to follow. — Ex-politicians had a hard matter to dispose of themselves; and among other extreme resources for one’s ennui, it was the fashion to go to the Haymarket and cry over a *Comédie larmoyante*, — I suppose by way of laying all the dust kicked up by schedules A and B. — One evening, as I was lounging there with Frank Walsingham, Lady Brettingham beckoned us into her box; and began to talk, as every lady was then talking, about crowns and sceptres, stars and garters, and the peeresses likely to shed lustre on the coronation. — Who was to be the fairest among the fair?

Frank was eager in partizanship of the young Duchess of R——, whose beauty the exquisite portrait of Lawrence had recently popularized; — Lady Brettingham, equally vehement in favour of a certain Lady Mitchelston, a young Irish beauty, as yet but little known in London.

“You will see,” said I, “that the knowing ones will be taken in. — On such occasions, women who usually produce little effect, make the greatest sensation. — A person of dazzling complexion often tells more by daylight, especially when enhanced by gaudy attire, than one of finer features. Lady A——, for instance, or Lady Mereworth.”

"Lady Mereworth!" interrupted Mariana, with a contemptuous smile; — "Lady Mereworth is forty, if she is a day!"

Had she said fifty, I could have borne it, — for the falsehood had been palpable. — But forty was too near thirty-seven to be passed over.

"I was acquainted with Lady Mereworth when a little girl in muslin frocks," said I, much nettled, "and can assure you, from my own knowledge, that she will not be eight-and-thirty till next April."

A glance across Frank towards Lady Brettingham apprized me that Walsingham was biting his lips to prevent laughing outright. Her ladyship was less forbearing.

"Forgive me!" said she, with the most impertinent air of significance:—"I was not aware that things had gone so far!"

I forget what I thought of when I wound up my watch that night; but I remember that, next day, when I entered the drawing-room in Grosvenor Square, I interrogated the countenance of Lady Mereworth, conceiving, for the first time, the possibility that it might be susceptible of variation. When the butler announced "Mr. Danby!" I looked straight towards her; and thought I saw, — mind, I only say I *thought* I saw, — a sudden deepening of complexion accompany her spontaneous smile of welcome. — I even fancied, — I had never thought of such things before, — that her breath came shorter, as I described to her the play of the preceding night, and in reply to her inquiries informed her I had been with Lady Brettingham.

Still, she stitched quietly on; and talked of a letter she had received from her son at Oxford, and of some difficulty she had found about the fitting of Mereworth's coronet for the approaching pageant, in a tone indicating anything but indifference to her family affairs, or want of indifference towards *me*; and when, after having picked up a needle-case which I purposely rolled upon the carpet, I made the movement a pretext for leaving my chair and taking a place beside her on the sofa, she made way for me precisely with the same mechanical civility she would have done for Lord Ormington. — It was not at all in *that* style it suited me to be encouraged!

"I do believe I am piqued!" said I to Cecil Danby, with

a smile, as I whipped my horse on entering my cabriolet, and drove off where I was little in the habit of driving, — into the Park, — “But after all, it is rather strange I should have been devoting my time to this woman for the last four months, and that she should not discover there is any difference between me and the chair I am sitting upon? — I will try the effect of a little absence, both on her and myself.”

Next day, I did not go so near Grosvenor Square as Park Lane! — I went and played tennis: and being out of practice, played abominably, — lost my money and my temper, and wished Lady Brettingham, (not Lady Mereworth,) at Hanover.

I had not the smallest thoughts of proving the success of my experiment so soon as the day following: but Frank Walsingham having proposed to me at White’s to drive me to Connaught Place, where I was to dine, as we traversed Grosvenor Square, proposed leaving cards for the Mereworths. Recalling to mind the expression of his face in Lady Brettingham’s box, I knew better than to object; more particularly as I was aware that, at *that* hour, Lady Mereworth was invariably out.

To my great annoyance, however, no sooner had we stopped at the door, than the officious porter, instead of quietly receiving the cards tendered to him, put aside the hand of the tiger, and advancing to the door steps informed *me* that “My lady *was* at home.” — It had not entered into the good man’s calculations that after one hundred and thirty-three consecutive visits, I could possibly want to shirk this single one.

There was no help for it. Though Frank muttered a word between his teeth that sounded terribly like “bore,” we were forced to go up; and on this occasion, there was no mistake. A blush of the deepest and most decided nature *did* brighten the cheek of Lady Mereworth as she accosted me! — Not a syllable of inquiry, no allusion to my yesterday’s absence. — Had her conscience been clear, it would have been only natural to say — “What were you doing yesterday that I did not see you?” — Very suspicious! — As I quoted in my last volume, and choose to quote again, “*une femme qui ne veut s’apercevoir de rien, s’est aperçue de tout!*” — This time, it was *my* breath

that grew short, however, as I attempted to divert her attention from Frank Walsingham's lively sallies.

Without imputing a thought to Lady Mereworth that angels might not harbour, it was certainly only natural that, if even the fauteuil on which I habitually sat, had been suddenly moved from the room, she should take heed of its absence; and after those hundred and thirty-three visits, spent in agreeable and improving conversation, it was at least to be expected that she should notice to herself —

Both how the chair I sat in, and the room  
Began to look when I had failed to come.

If she did *not* choose to notice, it was time I should make her : —

*Formosis levitas semper amica fuit.*

I stayed away four whole days : — (and the days of Grosvenor Square are not imperceptible segments of time like those of some unincidental country parsonage!) I stayed away, I say, four whole days; and went and bored myself with listening to the debates, and the Magnificat after them at Bellamy's. — I even submitted to be slapped on the back and called old fellow at White's, by those so vulgarly familiar as to enquire what the deuce I was thinking of that I looked so blue.

It was not blue, however, that Lady Mereworth looked, when I saw her that night at the Opera; — no! nor red as when I had visited her with Frank. She was now pale as ivory, — exquisitely pale. — It was the first time I had ever seen her look pale. Hitherto, her life had been so peaceful! — I am convinced she had not slept the two preceding nights!

I ought to have been sorry : — I never felt so happy in my life!

There is pity in many —  
Is there any in *him*? —  
No! ruth is a stranger  
To Cecil the Grim! —

quothe the old ballad. — Yet I ought to have been more merciful, if it be true, as the great truth-teller of all asserts, that "Pity is akin to Love:" — for I now admitted myself



to myself to be as decidedly in love as is compatible with the maturities of a 2, with a 4 preceding.

Luckily for *me*, — I was going to say luckily for *us*, — all the world was just then so vanity mad, that the fools of fashion had not a moment's leisure to recommend Lady Mereworth to consult Alexander concerning the weakness which so often imparted a strange redness to her eyes. — Everybody was aloft in the air on the hobby of the Coronation. — Not a woman alive, saving old Lady Cork who figured in hanging sleeves at the Coronation of George III., had seen with her eyes the spectacle of the crowning of a Queen; and people were stark staring mad about coronets and robes of estate.

It unluckily happened that Lady Brettingham, who, amid the universal irritability of the life of an *intrigante*. had rendered herself a sort of general agent for tickets for the Abbey, having exhausted all other sources in search after one more for the fifteenth cousin of some Liberal Irish member, attacked *me*; and chancing to meet Julia that day at dinner in Connaught Place, I mentioned my desire for a ticket for the Earl Marshal's box.

Next morning, as I was brooding in my dressing gown over my tender perplexities and my *café aulait*, in walked Herries with a piece of green pasteboard in his hand, as a pretext for the visit, — for I was not cordial enough with my most official brother-in-law to encourage him to much intimacy.

After thanking him for the ticket, which it seems was *his* per privilege of Treasury, (for he did not participate in Danby's abstinence from office,) — Herries suddenly launched out into a cut and dry oration, soulless, nerveless, heartless, as if an exposition of some Budget question to the House, — upon the sinfulness of courting one's neighbour's wife, and the ungrateful injury of shattering the household gods of a friend with whom I had crossed t's and dotted i's at the F. O., in strictest confederacy, twenty years before.

I wonder I did not exterminate him on the spot! — I contented myself however with blowing out the lamp of my coffee pot to hide my confusion; which operation affording some excuse for the inflammation of my complex-

ion, I simply and Cecilianly asked him what the deuce he meant by talking such nonsense?

Such was, I dare say, precisely the rejoinder that many an opposition member had often longed to make him. — *O pestis! O labe!* — To have a brother-in-law whom one dared not throw out of the window!

"But that Mereworth is the only one of my old colleagues who is so unfortunate as to be married," said I, "I should be at a loss to understand you. But considering the indifference you always saw me testify in the days to which you allude, towards Lady Votefilch's niece, it is somewhat curious you should fancy me enslaved, at seven and thirty, by a woman I did not think pretty at seventeen."

"I, my dear fellow? — Be assured I have something else to do than think of any trash of the kind!" — cried Herries. And I saw him beginning to puff and blow and rotundify into the official ox, to a degree that made me apprehend the first person plural. It only needed for Herries to say, "We have taken into consideration and seriously disapprove your liaison with Lady Mereworth," to make me hate her for life. The touch of such an idolclast would have shivered to pieces even the Medicean Venus!

"I beg to assure you, my dear Danby," he resumed, "that it is only at your sister's suggestion I broach the subject. — Julia is vastly uneasy. Julia is of opinion that amid the moral decencies arising in the regenerated state of society created by the influence and example of a virtuous queen, so strange a breach of personal, and, I may say, social obligations, — so terrible an inroad into the domestic happiness of one of the best and most unsuspecting of men, — an honour to the Order, as well as a staunch promoter of Reform, — cannot fail to affix a most injurious stigma to your name and family: and I can assure this honourable House, — that is, I can assure you, my dear Cecil, that if you imagine the Carlton House school morality likely to maintain its influence in this reformed and regenerated kingdom, you will find yourself in the minority."

Without condescending to remind him that he was usurping the Dronebyan privilege, (or that *quæ veritate operam dat oratio, incomposita sit et simplex*,) — "You

really alarm me," said I, coolly; — "alarm me, on *two* accounts, — first, for your welfare as a placeman; and, secondly, for your welfare as a husband; — for it is clear to me that Julia must be out of her wits, or she would not have suggested such an absurdity or impertinence as this interference. But that I bear too much respect to Lady Mereworth to mix her name in anything so contemptible as a family squabble, I should feel myself called upon to speak more seriously."

If not seriously, Herries seemed to think I was speaking quite plainly enough; and to disguise his embarrassment, began talking of the Earl Marshal's box.

There is a tradition in Germany that the shadowy resemblances of multitudes of men and women are constantly to be met with wandering over the mountain of the Brocken, with labels on their backs recording the names of those by whom they were banished to that super-terrestrial region: — "I wish you at the top of the Brocken!" — being tantamount to our English — "I wish you at Hanover."

I am of opinion that Herries would have borne the name of "CECIL" on his back as legibly as this present volume, had *his* effigy been encountered at that moment, on the mountain side! — I had hardly patience to sit out his visit, so eager was I to hasten to Grosvenor Square. — Lady Brettingham's jealousy and my sister's anxieties rendered me the happiest of my sex!

As it happened, I hastened so much, that I got there an hour earlier than my usual time, and to this circumstance was indebted for admittance; for when my accustomed visiting hour of four eventually struck, Lady Mereworth's carriage was announced, though she never went out before five. I saw clearly through her manoeuvre. Unwilling to expose me to the ignominy of being refused by the servant at the door, she had predetermined to quit the house before the dangerous charmer of her leisure should arrive. How enchantingly had the interference of Herries stood my friend!

But why my friend? — What did I gain by circumventing her prudent design? — So painfully was she embarrassed that she embarrassed me in my turn. — Her voice was so husky, her hand so tremulous, — she was evidently so much

in awe of me and of herself, that I began to be afraid of myself too. — Yes! I am not ashamed to own it. — I, Cecil Danby, — was afraid to approach the ear of this gentler Eve in her own fair bower of Eden; and I talked to her of all sorts of indifferent things in a voice as husky, and with a deportment as tremulous as her own. — How thoroughly absurd for two people of our age to be thus passion-shaken! — But, good Lord! it is only people of a certain age who have force of soul enough to be susceptible of strong emotions!

All that remained for me, when her carriage came, was to put her into it, — cursing in my heart her coachman's punctuality; and resolve to come earlier on the morrow. — I was now thoroughly absorbed by thoughts of *her*. I could think of nothing else; — marvelling beyond the expression of words how I could have remained blind all those weeks and months to what was silently passing between us. It was like two people starving in a hovel situated over an undetected gold mine!

*La nuit porte conseil.* My night brought counsel with it black as night. I should blush to own all the evil I projected, — all the evil I foresaw. — I could no longer entertain a doubt that I was far from an object of indifference to Lady Mereworth; and it would be easy so to work upon her feelings as to make her my slave. Years had elapsed since I had found myself master of a slave, — that is a slave worth reducing to slavery; — a slave who was the mistress of many slaves, — a slave in a diamond necklace and robes of brocade.

I could scarcely resist bragging of my intentions that night to Frank Walsingham; as, standing together on the steps at the Travellers', he alluded in an apologetic tone to Lady Brettingham, as if ashamed of having cut me out. However, I *did* abstain — not so much out of regard for Mereworth or affection for his wife, as out of respect for Cecil Danby.

Meyer is one of the best tailors who ever snipped a coat. Yet I said all sorts of uncivil things about him next morning, as I was dressing to proceed to Grosvenor Square; for though he fitted me to a T, I was afraid he might *not* fit me to a T-resa. Seriously, however, I had

not much to complain of; and I drove up to the door in Grosvenor Square, as gallantly as Wellington galloped on to the field of Waterloo, where he had planned an action, as people build chateaux en Espagne, twelve months before.

Joy upon joy, — I was admitted! — I made my way into the drawing-room as blithely as Romeo up the ladder of cords provided by that shocking old Friar Lawrence, whom scarcely an actor now-a-days is modest or immodest enough to represent; — I made my way, I say, into the drawing-room, and had a heavenly choir chaunted forth “She is saved!” as they do in the last act of Goëthe’s Faust, could not have been more assured of the fact. — I had no more chance of carrying her off, than the brazen monster in Hyde Park!

No more paleness, — no more nervousness. Her eye was bright with happiness, — her brow radiant with triumph; — she was not ashamed though her enemies addressed her in the gate! — I never saw a human countenance more joyously resplendent; — her son was with her! Lord Chippenham was seated by her side! — His father had sent for him from Oxford to the Coronation, where he was to officiate in the royal suite.

Now, I appeal to my readers whether, had Lady Mereworth entertained a becoming sense of my feelings towards her, she would have rejoiced in the idea of presenting to me a son twenty years of age? — And yet I swear she looked as proud and as pleased when she said — “Mr. Danby, my son, — Chippenham! — have you forgotten Mr. Danby?” — as if she had been doing the most agreeable thing in the world!

As to resenting her heartless conduct upon the young man, it was out of the question. Never did I see a nobler or finer young fellow, except in one or two of Sir Joshua’s portraits. The description given by Richardson of Sir Charles Grandison when a youth at Grandison Hall, shadows forth the noble, frank, and distinguished countenance of his mal à propos intruder.

I hate what is called “a youth,” — which is only a civiler word for hobbledohoy. But Chippenham was perfect, — Chippenham was, *quant au physique*, all I have described my brother to be *au moral*. He took me, mean-

while, so heartily by the hand, that I was forced to affect pleasure in recalling to mind the boy I had held in my arms on the deck of the *Ariel*, to show him the dolphins at play.

A change was over the spirit of my dream! — Though as sulky as Achilles, and as grandiose as Agamemnon, I submitted to be disarmed by a child!

Nothing could be more painful than the unsuspecting frankness with which Chippenham took himself for granted as the friend of his father's friend. He did not seem to conceive it possible I could find him a bore; but with gay ingenuousness, began to consult me upon his dress, for the coronation. — Who was the best robe-maker? — Where was he to get this, and look for that? — His father, he said, was too much engrossed by business to be molested about such trifles; — and he evidently addressed me less as the infallible fashion-giver of the day, than as the family Fool, to whom alone it was permissible to prate of velvet and ostrich feathers.

Lady Mereworth was delighted; — listening with her infatuated eyes fixed on his glowing face, as a woman gazes at twenty on her lover, but at forty on her son; — and when he asked me to drive him down to Webb's in the Strand, — (yes! he actually asked *me* — the Cecil Danby of White's — to drive him into the Strand!) — she seemed to think that nothing could be more natural than the proposal.

I was obliged to comply; — and to be sincere, in spite of his provoking good faith, was delighted with young Chippenham. — Nevertheless, as we went along, I had serious thoughts of driving against a lamp-post and breaking his bones; for he had the audacity to confide to me certain of his college indiscretions, precisely in the tone in which a young man relates his follies to an old friend of the family, whose age renders him indulgent. — Moreover, by the glances cast at my companion from a variety of britzkas and barouches as we drove along, I could plainly see it passing in many a giddy mind, "*Who* in the world is that handsome creature Cecil has got with him?" — Cecil was only number II that day in his own kingdom of Coxcombry! — The throne of Richard was succumbing to Harry Bolingbroke.

I pass over the irritabilities of the next four-and-twenty hours. — I remember being woke at five o'clock on the morning of the Coronation day, to the "Master Barnardine rise and be hanged," — *i. e.* "dressed," — of O'Brien, with all the headache and soreness of a man who feels that he has not only been drunk the night before, but has fallen down stairs in his tipsiness and bruised himself from head to foot : — that moral fall of mine being indeed a startler !

It would be a stupid thing to indulge in the flourish of fine writing about a penultimate coronation, the memory whereof has been obliterated by a greater profusion of gold lace and spangles, on an occasion of which an unprecedented concatenation of interests tended to enhance the charm. — I shall therefore spare my readers the

Pride of heraldry, the pomp of power ;

and admit that, albeit at five o'clock in the morning, — a capital time of day to part with, in pumps, on the steps of Crocky after supper, but hateful to shake by the hand before breakfast, in any species of costume, — I was so much at odds with the human race, including the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Cecil Danby, that I had a vast mind to jump into one of the early coaches I saw starting from Hatchett's, and make off for Truro or Aberdeen, — no matter where, — to escape from London and the Coronation !

But I knew that Danby would take such a desertion exceedingly amiss. My brother and brother-in-law were to be in their places among the Hon. Gents of the House of Commons : and it was to me that Danby looked to take charge of his daughter, who was to accompany Julia to the Lord Chamberlain's gallery.

Albeit indifferent to mere glaring assemblages of fair faces as to a bed of tulips or anemones, I was more pleased than I liked to acknowledge to myself, on entering the Abbey, by the striking congregation of beautiful women lining the venerable walls, like the sparry incrustations that crystallize some gloomy grot. — Sparkling diamonds, softened by the graceful wave of snowy plumes, served to enhance the living tapestry of fair faces —

Some looking up, some forward, or aside,  
As suits the conscious charm in which they pride.

I did not, however, dwell more minutely on the reality of the scene than I now intend to dwell on its reminiscences. — Having sunk sullenly into my allotted seat, in a gallery of the transept, which I had selected among several places offered to me the preceding week, as overlooking the seats of the peeresses, — I pretended to fall asleep to escape the cross-questioning of Lady Harriet Vandeleur, who, by the malice of the Gods, was seated near me, — presenting to the morning sun the awful spectacle of a woman of fifty-five, — farded and frizzled, — pomaded and pomponed, — exhibiting half an acre of complexion rivalling in colour and texture the chest of a Lincolnshire frog. — As I was *not* asleep, it was hard to be oppressed by such a nightmare.

Fast by my side, too, sat a certain lawyer, who presumed to address me with as much confidence as if a Cecil Danby permitted his acquaintance to be claimed by any bigwigged thing, unprecedented, on such an occasion, by the mace and seals.

Everybody knows the sort of hysterical anxiety pervading an assemblage of a hundred thousand souls and bodies, prepared to witness great events and finding them tardy of arrival. People forced to take their places at six o'clock in the morning as spectators of a play for which the curtain is not to draw up till noon, talk, and wonder, and bewilder themselves into such a state of excitement, that if a stray lap-dog runs across the stage, they fall into convulsions of laughter — or if a fair face present itself, expatiate into acclamations of delight.

I was leaning my head against the pillar adjoining my place, — my eyes closed against the pageant around me, — as absorbed in reverie as the city ostler, described in one of the ballads of a person named Wordsworth, (a hybrid writer, the produce of a cross between Poetry and Philosophy,) who, true to his early associations, as a farmer, stands on the pavement watching the weather, in harvest time,

As though he'd twelve reapers at work in the Strand ;— thinking how little, at twenty and a half in Hanover Square, I had expected to live through three reigns, and achieve my present years of indiscretion, without accomplishing distinctions such as would assign me a specific



place in the ceremonial of the day. — I don't know *what* I fancied I should be, — Chancellor, Chamberlain, Ambassador, peer, or premier, — but the coxcomb who knows himself capable of *anything*, conceives it impossible he can end without being something. — Yet *there* I was, in my bag and sword, — no better than in the onset : — a mere younger son, — a man about town, — a useless cobweb still fluttering on the gilded rafters of the Temple of Folly !

From these Solomoniacal cogitations I was roused by a growing murmur of approval deepening into rapturous outcries. Opening my eyes with a stare of interrogation at my neighbour, the officious lawyer, he replied with a detestable smirk, "Oh, nothing ! only one of the peeresses taking her place." — To me, "one of the peeresses" implied Lady Mereworth. — I could not understand just then that there existed any other than that single Countess ; and starting up, began to adjust my glasses for investigation.

I was mistaken of course. Debrett, Burke, and Westminster Abbey, admitted the existence of many peeresses, albeit I knew but one. The woman entering was younger and taller. — It was, if I remember, the Marchioness of Hastings, then a bride, with her train borne by her page, looking the high-born and high-wedded Baroness, to a degree that enchanted my neighbours. To *me* she was no more than the marble effigy of Lady Elizabeth Russell in one of the adjoining chapels ; and I therefore sank to sleep again, — that is, to the semblance of sleep.

Soon, however, murmurs of applause arose so frequently, for the diamonds of this Duchess, or the beauty of the other Countess, that I judged it expedient to be wide awake.

But when *my* Peeress arrived there were no acclamations, — no murmurs of applause, that I could distinguish. For she came so mildly, so unpretendingly, — she stole so softly to her place, like the dawning of a summer day, — that they knew not of her coming till she was there. *I* say her from the moment she entered the doors. *My* eyes were riveted upon her fair, pure, matronly beauty, — her downcast looks, — her cheeks suffused with blushes that might have become the maidenliness of sixteen. For in

nature Lady Mereworth *was* sixteen. The world had done nothing to wither the complexion of her heart.

I fancied — Heaven and Lord Mereworth forgive me, — that the eyes thus inclining to the ground were shrinking less from the gaze of the thousands assembled, than from the certainty that in that crowded Abbey there was

An eye would mark  
Her coming, and look brighter when she came !

From the post I occupied, I could watch, unseen and unsuspected by *her*, her every look and movement. — She was placed by order of precedence, next to the restless, showy, fussy Countess of Grindlesham ; who kept leaning over to whisper to this person and gesticulate to that, moping and mowing, full of fashionable fidgets and graceful attitudization. Lady Mereworth, — charming contrast, a halcyon brooding on the waters — soft, gentle, womanly — was tranquil and

inwardly intent,  
Like some fair statue on a monument ;

and when the pealing of the anthem began, I even saw her droop

With head declined, as one who prayed.

The solemn strain of that august music penetrated her inmost soul ; and when again she raised her head, the darkened tint of her eyelashes showed that tears had been gathered there. Her companions were not thus affected. While the mighty diapason of the organ was still pealing among the groined arches above, speaking as it were the language of Scripture, and awful as the voice which on Mount Sinai smote with awe the ear of the prophet, Lady Grindlesham and the rest of those foolish women were arranging their diamond sleeve broaches, settling their cherusses of gold, or nodding to some fool in the galleries, as idle and as discreditable as myself. — Decidedly, there was but one noble lady on the bench of peeresses that day !

Suddenly, I saw that drooping head uplifted, like some flower on which a sudden dew has conferred new powers of vitality. Lady Mereworth looked up, with a sort of seraphic enthusiasm one can imagine a Gheber turning his

face in adoration towards the glorious East ; and I could perceive by the movement of the fair shoulders to which her crimson robes imparted such dazzling whiteness, that she was moved by deep emotion.

There was not much difficulty in detecting the cause. At that moment the Princesses of the Blood were entering the choir : in the train of one of whom walked Chippenham, looking as if he had stepped out of one of the Vandyke's aristocratic pictures — the very epitome of beauty and nobleness. He was all that he ought to be, — officiating at the crowning of his sovereign ; and just *what* he ought to be, to do honour to such a ceremony. One could not help recalling to mind that his father's Barony dated from the days of Stephen !

As the train passed before the seats of the peeresses, poor Theresa sat " like a nun, breathless with adoration," enjoying precisely such a state of silent ecstasy as may have awaited the orisons of the blessed martyr, her Spanish namesake. At that moment, she thought of no mortal living but her son, — no ! spiteful reader, — certainly not even of Mereworth ; — for she knew precisely in what part of the bench of Peers opposite, his place was appointed, and I can swear that her eyes never once wandered in that direction. If they had, they would have found his attention absorbed by the rigmarole of the Earl of Wolverton, who sat beside him, concerning some new project submitted to the Royal Agricultural Society of Belfast, for draining the bogs of Ireland by means of Caoutchouc filters. But, I say again, she thought of no mortal creature but her son.

Even when Lady Grindlesham, who was craning and grimacing, turning her head every second to the right and left, like the clockwork conjurer at Merlin's, suddenly noticing Lord Chippenham, began to indulge in vociferous compliments, I saw that she answered not a word. — It is true, Lady Grindlesham's compliments most likely regarded the richness of his point collar, or the fall of his ostrich plume.

And thus it was, that, of the hundred thousand people present, one alone entered into the feelings of Lady Mereworth ! — To all the rest, she was nothing, — she was only " one of the peeresses," — less attractive to the

mobility than a herald's pursuivant, — less attractive to the nobility than the ugliest lady in waiting. While I sat perched like a solitary sparrow on my gallery top, — with my glasses fixed upon her, — (blessed be Dollond for their excellence !) noting her every variation of complexion, — her every rising tear, — her every nascent emotion ! My soul was with her, as the green snake coiled around the bird of Christabel, —

Which with the dove still heaves and stirs,  
Swelling its neck, as she swells hers !

Surely such sympathies, cannot exist in vain !

Spirits are not finely touch'd save to fine issues ;

And so ardent a passion could not exist purportless as that which now made me forget my forty-two years of age, — and, still more wonderful, *her* seven and thirty ! —

“ May I ask the name of that very lovely woman, Sir ? ” — inquired my officious neighbour, whose reiterated questions throughout the day made me almost regret I had not brought the two volumes of the peerage in my pocket.

“ *Which* lovely woman, Sir ? ” — said I, looking half-fierce, half stupified at the interruption.

“ The one you have been admiring for the last twenty minutes,” he coolly replied. — “ A most divine creature, certainly ! ”

“ *That*, Sir ? ” — said I, suddenly jerking the sight of my glasses thirty yards from Lady Mereworth, to the benches occupied by the wives of peers' eldest sons. — “ *That* is Lady Tullamore, daughter-in-law to the Earl of Charleville ; daughter of the late Jack Campbell ; one of the loveliest women in England. She used to be called in Italy “ *Beaujolais la Belle*.” Is there any other information, Sir, I can have the honour of affording you ? ”

The lawyer who had stood up and tempted me, asking me questions, seemed scarcely to know what to make of the sudden ferocity of my deportment ; but while he remained confounded, — harassed out of patience like some noble steed by the gadfly that has settled on his flank, — I rushed out of the gallery, to wander for coolness and freedom among the dark passages of the Abbey.

I was just in that state of emotion and excitement when

the senses of sight and hearing are lost in whirl and confusion. The glaring colours, glancing and glittering in the Abbey, — the murmur of thousands of whispers unlike any other murmur in the world, — combined with the pealing thunder of the organ, and its mysterious echoes of chanting, pursued me as I hurried along. — Not a soul was to be seen in those dismal corridors. All who had eyes to see, had pressed into the Church to gaze upon the gorgeous pageant of the moment. Even the door-keepers were peeping between the interstices; and I could not find a human being to show me the way out, among the intertangled corridors devised to facilitate ingress to the various boxes.

I wanted air, — I wanted to reach the open doors; — yet having attained the ground floor, whichever way I took was sure to lead me back into the body of the Abbey. At the close of every passage, was a vista of kneeling figures, officiating in the solemnity of the moment.

At length, impatient of my gropings in the dark, I determined to make my way into the Abbey; and pushed forward towards the light glimmering at the end of the passage in which I stood, which exhibited the usual termination of kneeling men and women. — Still dazzled by visions of fair shoulders and countess's coronets, — and judging that the sortie in question would lead me into the transept pretty near the peeresses' bench, I emerged into the open space.

ΕΣΤΙ ΤΕ ΦΥΣΗ ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΗ ἢ ΣΥΜΠΑΡΑ ΔΙΕΥΡΥΜΑΤΩΔΗΣ.

Merciful heaven! — instead of attaining a living breathing atmosphere of beauty and splendour, I stood in the still cold house of death! — Not a sound, — not a movement! — The kneeling figures were the marble effigies surrounding the tomb of the Duke of Buckingham; — and in that quiet awful chapel, did I sit myself down, chilled to the very marrow by the fearful contrast of past and present, — the living and the dead.

Never had the voice of the preacher denounced the Vanity of Vanities in a voice so trumpet-tongued, as that which whispered to me from the grave of the court favourite of other century —

Reliquendum est !

## CHAPTER XIV.

Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit angula campum. — VIRG.

Send to Newman's for two pair of posters. — ED.

EVERYBODY knows the sort of rush that prevails in London after the coming off of a popular show at the close of the season. — Post-horses at every door, — family coaches loaded with imperials stuffed full of faded finery and disappointed misses, at every turnpike; — all the world is smitten with a full-gallop *entrainement* towards its country seat.

I was decidedly out of spirits. — Windsor Castle was no longer *my* country seat; and Ormington Hall a country seat that my soul abhorred. — London was impossible, even to *my* metropolitan predilections. I made my way therefore once more to Grosvenor Square; in hopes some kindly breath might indicate to the vane of my inclinations whitherward they were to direct their course.

For the first time for fifteen years, I found Mereworth in his own drawing room instead of his wife; and from the extreme cordiality of his hand-shaking, judged that something was amiss; — for *le mari qui ne veut s'apercevoir de rien* is even more to be dreaded than the wife.

The room smelt as powerfully of the paste of newly boarded works, as Hatchard's or Murray's, and no wonder, — for on the table usually covered with Sevres ink-stanks, Dresden shepherdesses, and Bohemian drinking glasses, — as elegant a confusion of useless nothingnesses as the most crowded ball-room, — lay a collection of goodly tomes — “Excursions” and “Brunnens” — “Autumns on the Rhine” — “Cruises in the Levant” — “Expeditions in Upper Egypt,” — and all the other paper kites of the spring *volée*, purporting to pilot the fashionable tourists of the autumn. — There were half a dozen Hand-books, and as many Posting maps; — travelling was evidently the order of the day.

“You are just in time to assist us with your advice, my dear Danby,” said Mereworth, again seating himself to the table. — “Theresa is so thoroughly done up by the fatigues of the season, that Halford thinks very seriously

of her case, and advises a milder climate. — Instead therefore of going into the country to shoot with Chippenham, (who, by the way, was off this morning into Norfolk,) I shall hasten to the Continent. — My wife, poor thing, is naturally anxious to be off, for her health is sadly shattered. — We go on Saturday, — but whether to Pau or Nice, or whether we shall make at once for Naples, I can scarcely make up my mind. — I, you know, must be back after Christmas for Parliament and the boys' holidays; — but Theresa will remain abroad till the spring!"

I might as well not have risked the rheumatism by moralizing those five and twenty minutes in the damp chapel containing the Duke of Buckingham's monument! for at Mereworth's announcement, my heart began to beat a *générale*, as if the guard were turning out for the King and Queen.

At that moment, Lady Mereworth entered the room. I had never seen her so pale, — I had never seen her so depressed; — and began to be uneasy lest these medical prognostications should bode more than one of the ordinances which, at the close of every London season, ensure the re-engagement of couriers, the signature of passports, and the purchase of Hand-books. — Perhaps the emotions of the gentle heart of Theresa were *really* corroding that hitherto unshaken frame! — Perhaps the damask cheek was *really* ceding its freshness to the worm i'the bud! — Oh! Cecil — Cecil!

I wonder, by the way, whether Sir Henry ever surmised the amount of practice which for twenty years of his life, the malefactions of the last-named individual threw into his hands! — Lady Brettingham's jealous fits alone, or as *she* called them, fits of nervousness, must have been worth twenty guineas per month to him, for nearly three seasons and a half.

On the present occasion I expressed myself properly anxious, — by *properly* meaning as anxious as a man can be touching a woman's health, with her husband in the room; — and Lady Mereworth replied, as I suppose every woman replied that day whose health was enquired after, — "that the ceremony of the preceding day had been extremely fatiguing, — the heat excessive, — and the difficulty of getting away insupportable. Her hair-dresser

had been with her at five o'clock in the morning, and they had not sat down to dinner till ten at night."

All this of course was for the *cantonnade*, after the style in which squirefied families talk at table, for the edification of the servants, looking at each other all the time as much as to say "fudge!" — I flattered myself that Lady Mereworth was looking "fudge" at *me*; — meaning to insinuate that her sufferings were far from an affair of yesterday: and my looks replied appropriately by a fervent benediction. — Mereworth did not hear us; he was poring over a map of the Archipelago.

A minute afterwards, raising his head suddenly from the chart, perhaps to surprise us, he exclaimed — "By the way, Cecil, who was that lovely girl of whom I saw you taking such care in the rain last night, when we were all turned out of the Abbey to await for the carriages?"

Happening to be seated so near Lady Mereworth as to catch a view of her countenance, I saw her cheeks flush crimson while waiting my reply: and had still enough coxcombry in my soul to profit by the indication, and prolong her suspense.

"I don't remember any woman in particular, to whom I devoted myself yesterday," said I, assuming a tone as though Cupid in person officiated as tiger to my cabriolet.

"A beautiful creature, — a clear brunette, for whom I saw you half knocking down one of the policemen to procure a seat," persisted Mereworth — while his Theresa's complexion rose and rose at every word, like the mercury in a thermometer.

Still, I chose to look uncertain, though well aware that it was my niece; over whom I had mounted guard during the two hours that Julia had been compelled to wait in the covered way for their carriage.

"I scarcely remember to have seen a more charming creature!" resumed the Earl, holding up the map to the light, to ascertain the exact line of some newly established steamer. — "So much grace, yet such perfect simplicity. And then, what a variable complexion! As I stood watching her while you were talking to her, it reminded me of those beautiful lines of the old poet, (Ben Jonson's,



an't they?) of the eloquent blood, speaking in some fair one's cheeks —

Which so divinely wrought  
That you might almost dream her body thought!"

Blockhead! — His Theresa's body was thinking at the rate of a Locke or a Maupertius, within half a yard of the back of his chair, — yet he saw nothing!

Lady Mereworth's thoughts, however, were so manifest, and so manifestly painful, that I took compassion on her.

"Surely you do not allude to Danby's daughter?" said I. "Did you never happen to see my pretty niece before?"

"Of course it was Miss Danby!" cried Mereworth, again suddenly turning round, and addressing his wife. "We ought to have guessed it, by her being with Mrs. Herries!"

"And now I think of it, she is the image of her poor mother!" — said Lady Mereworth, cheerfully, as if greatly relieved.

"To be sure, how little one notes the lapse of time!" said the Earl, with an emphatic gesture of the chin, and solemn voice, as if quoting from Young's Night Thoughts. — "It seems but yesterday that I remember poor Susan Theydon coming out! — Do you recollect, Cecil, — just before you went to Lisbon?"

I hated talking about Lisbon, — and I hated thinking about poor Lady Susan, — two fertile sources of melancholy reflections.

"Jane is scarcely yet seventeen," said I, — evasively; — "a charming creature, — full of sense and sensibility. From her earliest childhood, my brother has devoted himself to her. Danby is entirely wrapt up in that girl!"

Lady Mereworth was now looking amazingly happy that I began almost to fear the expedition to a milder climate would be abandoned; — and accordingly fell into raptures about one or two other of the beauties who were supposed to have excelled at the ceremony of the preceding day. But she was in such a provoking mood of self-satisfaction, that nothing seemed to excite her uneasiness.

A minute afterwards, it was *my* turn to be startled.

"Are you not enchanted, my dear Theresa, that it should turn out after all to be Cecil's niece?" — said

Mereworth, coolly ; — the lady with equal coolness replying, “ I am indeed ! — I must confess that my uncertainty on the subject kept me all night from closing my eyes.”

It was the turn of *my* body to think now, — and I own it thought, through a blush of the most carnation dye, that the happy pair before me were two of the most extraordinary people in the world.

Three volumes and a quarter of my sapient instructions have perhaps so far enlightened the mind of my Public, as to enable it to think in its turn. — My fairer readers have possibly surmised the truth : that young Chippenham had been very much struck by Jane, and that his parents were anxious to ascertain to whom the first sighs of their heir apparent were about to be dedicated. I remembered, now, having seen Lord Chippenham loitering about on the day before, when I was engaged in conversation with Jane and Julia. But he was interesting to me only as his mother’s son, — not as the admirer of my niece.

Still, it was clearly not the sleeplessness of the night before, whatever its origin, which had caused the President of the Royal College to suggest a southern climate to Lady Mereworth. — The evil must be of older standing. I returned, therefore, to the charge.

“ How will you ever be able to separate yourself from your son, by a sojourn on the Continent ? ” said I, addressing the Countess.

“ Chippenham must at all events remain at Oxford another term,” said she. “ He has not taken his degree. Indeed he is not of age till the autumn. — By that time, probably I shall return to England.”

“ And I shall myself be in London part of the winter,” said the Earl. “ By the way, Cecil, — you are now an idle man. Why not come abroad ? — Why not spend the winter with us at Nice or Naples ? — In that case, I would bring the old Ariel round to Naples in the spring, and we might enjoy a cruise to Egypt, to remind us of the days when we were young.”

Was there ever such insulting confidence in man’s integrity, as to propose to him the care of a charming wife during a prolonged absence ! — I swear the blockhead deserved that I should accept his insolent offer. — But “ *neminem id agere, ut ex alterius prædetur inscitia* ! ”

"Your proposal is indeed tempting," said I, and I drew nearer to the table covered with moist octavos, as if to weigh the comparative merits of "Excursions in Egypt" and a "Ramble through the Morea." — When, unluckily, Lady Mereworth's cheeks took to thinking again; and how on earth was I to interpret whether her present blush were expressive of "Go!" — or "Stay!"

It would have been agreeable enough to me to bear them company, even had the Countess of Mereworth of Grosvenor Square been as indifferent to me as the Lady Theresa of Maybush Lodge; for I was in the state of unattachedness which makes an object of any kind a relief. A leader is as indispensable to me as to a morning paper, or a dog to a blind beggar. Besides, I really wanted to have a look at the revolutionized countries which had been casting their skins, to ascertain whether they were the sleeker or brighter for their change of vestments.

But just as Mereworth was cordially renewing his invitations, and assuring me it would be a great comfort to him, since he was obliged to return to England for Parliament, to leave Theresa to my care, — the door opened, and "the Earl of Wolverton!" was announced; who came shuffling in, with a roll of papers nearly as large as himself under his arm, — plans and projections for the Ca-outchouc drainage which, in pursuance of his botheration of the day before, he was eager to lay before his brother of the Peers.

Lady Mereworth took the opportunity to inquire of the servants who ushered him in, whether her carriage were in waiting? — and, on pretence of an engagement, hurried away, leaving me in the hands of the Philistines. — But, to my utter surprise, on taking with a lover's peevish tenderness the place she had just vacated on the sofa, I found legibly written in pencil on the back of the book of the Coronation Service she had been rolling in her hand during the conversation, the single word "REFUSE!" — Could I doubt that it was inscribed by the hand of Theresa, and addressed to myself? — The pencil which had traced the letters lay within the pages, and I could even fancy it still warm from her touch!

I do not see what right any two Peers of the realm could have to suppose that a younger brother like myself,

without an acre of land he could call his own, would give his attention to a patent plan for bog reclaiming.

Yet though it had been nothing to me to see the whole Bog of Allen so substantialized as to admit of removing the Curragh to its surface, I own I ought to have made a more decent show of attention to my noble cousin's moon-raking projects.

But though the House of Lords was compelled to listen to his nonsense, I was not; — and in the midst of a demonstration calculated to drive even Babbage to his wits' end, — I vanished, — almost as clumsily as Hamlet Senior through the creaking trap-door of some provincial theatre. Mereworth merely looked up from the papers in his hands, as I left the room, to say — “You'll let me know, Cecil, how you make up your mind, — for we shall be off before Sunday.”

Now there are two causes, my very dear Public, — take it from me who have penetrated to the heart's core of the matter, — there are two, equally cogent causes, for the severity of a woman towards the admirer she thinks proper to snub. You may be loved too much, — or too little. — How was I to decide between these alternatives, as regarded Lady Mereworth?

I went straight from Grosvenor Square to White's; — and never was more conscious of the power of a Club to dispel the irritations of egotism. — Everybody was in spirits. Everybody was talking about the Coronation. Everybody was talking about their pleasure-plans for the winter. — It would have been impertinent at such a moment to touch upon my personal discontents. — If I had come in on crutches, or with my arm in a sling, they would not have noticed it; — how much less the pensive expression of a countenance

• Sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought!

All true philosophers would have done as I did; *viz.*, joined the house dinner that day with half a dozen of the pleasantest fellows about town; and, with the aid of an extra bottle of claret, forget there was such a thing in the world as that softer sex which deals so hardly with us when it finds us growing soft in our turn.

Narratur et prisci Catonis  
Sæpè mero calmissee virtus;

and I own I have always found my strength of mind and body renovated by a glass of Château Margoux. — The magic bath of Medea, which converted elderly gentlemen into young ones, was doubtless neither more nor less than a pipe of Cyprus wine.

"Mereworth tells me he has been trying to persuade you to go abroad with him?" observed Danby, as I was dining tête-à-tête with him in Connaught Place the following day.

"Yes, — he *wished* it, but I have declined!" was my careless reply.

"I should have thought it might have suited you, as you will not consent to accompany us this year to Ormington?" said my brother, — "The Mereworths are such excellent people!"

"Excellent people are seldom very amusing ones," said I, taking occasion to be very curious in salting my filberts.

"Excellent people are excellent companions when able to amuse oneself in their company, with a succession of interests and excitements, as in foreign travel," said Danby. — "I scarcely know two persons for whom I have a higher regard than Mereworth and his wife."

I muttered something about the mediocrity of the Earl's abilities, which certainly came ill from *my* lips, so long as Danby chose to be indulgent.

"I do not agree with you," said my brother. "Mereworth has precisely the order of abilities most available to his position in life. I see no great occasion for an Earl with forty thousand a year to be a man of genius; while good plain sense and steadfast uprightness are invaluable qualifications. — The prudence of such a man as Mereworth in the Upper House, is worth all that the utmost brilliancy of talent or acquirement could compass in our own."

"That is to say, you think him dull enough for the lords," said I, peevishly. — "Well! I dare say you know best. — By the way, his son seems inclined to keep up the family predilections. Chippenham was amazingly struck yesterday with the beauty of Jane."

"Indeed? — It is to that, perhaps, I am indebted for Mereworth's visit to-day; — for he inquired about my

daughter, — and told me that if I intended to present her next spring, whenever Mrs. Herries was disinclined to act as her chaperon, Lady Mereworth would be happy to be Julia's substitute. — Let me see — Mereworth's daughters are married, I think ?”

The idea of Theresa as a grandmother moved my choler so amazingly, that I swallowed a glass of Madeira at a mouthfull.

“Mereworth has no daughters,” said I. “He has two boys at Eton ; but Chippenham is the only one grown up.”

And I proceeded to describe the noble heir of the house of Mereworth in terms which, at the close of my observations, induced my brother to observe, with a heavier sigh than I had ever heard him indulge in since the loss of poor little Arthur : — “The idea of Jane's marrying at all seems to me almost sacrilegious. I dare say the feeling has a selfish origin, for I scarcely know what will become of me when I have lost her ! — Still less am I inclined to form ambitious projects on her account. Let her only be happy, and I shall be content ! — Yet I own to you, my dear Cecil, that could I have projected a conquest for her, or could I now project a marriage, it would be with a young fellow such as you describe in Chippenham, and such as I know him to be in all particulars of fortune and connection.”

“To the good health of the happy couple, then !” — said I, gaily, — again filling my glass.

“Hush, hush !” — interrupted Danby, by way of moderating my enthusiasm, little suspecting its hollowness, — for the idea of Lady Mereworth's son as a father of a family *ne me souriait pas le moins du monde*. “I have always heard that the premature discussion of such matters was fatal to their success. Not another word therefore on the subject. I trust that Jane may never hear so much as the name of Lord Chippenham, till she is fairly in society, and able to decide upon his merits by comparison. — She sees no young men at Ormington. Our nearest approach to a Corydon is Sir Gerald Moseley, who is forty, and has the gout. — Jane is quite safe ; — and next season, should this lad's fancy dwell upon her in the interim, he will have the field before him !”

I was about to make some civil rejoinder ; but was in-

interrupted by the servant entering the room with one of those little delicate billets which, in former days, so infallibly followed me to every dinner party, that the moment I saw the butler enter the dining room with a small silver salver at dessert, I used mechanically to extend my hand.

I was now a little out of practice. Nevertheless, although the present little note was addressed

To the Hon<sup>ble</sup>

Cecil Danby,

in a hand-writing which the French called fly-legged, or *à pattes de mouche*,—it produced no emotion in my heart. It was from Lady Brettingham, (that eternal Lady Brettingham!)—before opening whose letters, one was pre-assured they contained some interested petition.

On the present occasion, she affected, as usual, to want something for somebody—I forget what,—probably a coronation medal.—But I felt convinced that what she *really* wanted,—and of course did *not* ask,—was to know whether I dined at my brother's, as I had that morning announced to her by way of excuse for avoiding a party at her house.

Lady Brettingham was the only person who had noticed the frequency of my visits to Grosvenor Square; the only person in whom they excited suspicion.—She detested the gentle Countess, the pure serenity of whose unobtrusive good breeding was harder to bear than the insolence of the Exclusives. Moreover a fallen angel is never perfectly at ease in presence of an angel, the brightness of whose *auréole* is unimpaired.—Lady Brettingham would have given worlds to find out anything against Theresa.

“My compliments, and there is no answer,” said I, to the butler, whose attitude was one of expectation.

For I knew that the note was fully answered by the discovery that I really dined in Connaught Place.

## CHAPTER XV.

How beautiful is youth !  
 How often, as it passes by  
 With flowing limbs and flashing eye,  
 With soul that not a care has cross'd,  
 With cheek that not a tint has lost.  
 How often, in my heart I cry,  
 How beautiful is youth ! — WILLIAM HOWITT.

Il était tout en petites habitudes, en petits détails, en petits bonheurs, qui se répandaient ça et là dans sa conversation ; car enfin le moyen de suivre sans de grandes précautions cet admirable vagabond, qui ne sait jamais lui même où il va ? — J. JANIN.

I AM sorely afraid, dear Public, that you accuse me of progressing in my story after the fashion of the automaton invented by Sir Francis Blake and Mr. Edgeworth, or some other amateur experimental philosophers, which was to acquire locomotion from the influence of atmospheric pressure, and which, at the close of a year or so, had put its best leg foremost so as to advance the ten thousandth part of an inch. — For I cannot expect the circumstantiality of Cecil at forty, to please like the circumstantiality of Cecil at twenty-one. Even were the convolvulus bed as bright as ever, — which of you, gentle readers, would care to know the express terms of any billet likely to be addressed to me under its draperies ?

I will consequently do you the favour to pass over the tediousness of that autumn and winter ; which was spent by the Mereworths at Naples, and by me in a succession of country houses assuring myself night and morning, with a punctuality worthy of themselves, that I cared nothing at all about the matter.

I was losing my time, — but what was to be done ? — After that brief but emphatic letter of Lady M. it would have been direct disobedience to her commands to proceed to the Continent ; — and though I own I hate English country visiting, the system has its advantages for an idle younger brother.

It was some time, moreover, since I had enjoyed any tolerable shooting or hunting. The make-believe work of the stag hounds had somewhat spoiled me for Leicester-shire ; and if ever I intended to enter again into the tor-



tures of a hard day's sport, now was my time. The boys of the day, — saucy shrimps from college or the Guards, — fellows who ought to hunt in pinafores, — were beginning to wax jocular among themselves, about Cecil's style of riding, and Cecil's weight; and unless I intended to enlist at once in the brigade of veterans, it was my business to stand well that winter both at Melton and with the Pytchley.

I flatter myself I escaped the name of Old Danby by feats of very tolerable *éclat*, and got off cheap too, for my broken-collar bone was only the affair of a week; at the end of which, luckily for me, came a long frost, which, as is usually the case among hunting men, brought my home- and family tenderly to my recollection. The domestic affections warmed in my heart in proportion to the severity of the weather.

Even *I* was struck by the beauty of Jane when I arrived at Ormington Hall. — What more striking than the daily development of womanhood at that exquisite age of seventeen, when, as in the last few weeks that a picture lingers on the easel of an artist, master-strokes gradually animate the canvas, and bring out the strength of the work, while a slight varnish over the whole imparts brilliancy to effects hitherto unperceived.

Does any one wish for an elaborate description of my niece? — She was of the middle height, with a profusion of rich brown hair, springing so gracefully from a beautifully formed head, as to be an ornament in itself. Her figure was slight, yet fully developed; but her peculiar charm consisted in a sort of awkward grace, if I may so describe it, — a struggling against shyness, — which every moment brought the colour to her cheek, and a half-pleased, half-anxious expression to her eye, rendering her the very image of sensibility. Jane had not a look or gesture precisely like those of her neighbours; and the consequence was that, however crowded the room, the eye was always seeking her with curiosity and attention.

Her father's sought her indeed with a degree of interest amounting almost to idolatry. Danby seemed to feel that the child was already lost to him, — that the woman would not long remain; that, no sooner seen in the world than so lovely and gifted a creature would be snatched away from his paternal arms, to consecrate the happiness

of another home. — I was almost sorry for him, indeed, when I perceived how utterly he had surrendered his soul to the influence of this one affection. It was not like his usual wisdom, — his usual moderation. — Yet how could one wonder? — The loss of his wife and child had left him only this solitary tie to brighten the sterile dreariness of a public career.

Fontenelle used to say that to be happy in this world a man should content himself with being the centre of a circle two feet in diameter. The circle of which Danby felt himself to be the centre, was not much more than two dozen feet across. But though this limitation of feeling is far more distinct from egotism than the expansiveness which includes five hundred friends in the circle, it exposes the centre of such a system to greater peril of isolation. — Danby was anything but a worldly man. — His sympathies were with the universe; — with the Gentoo in his canopy shed as much as with the Parisian in his tribune at the Institute; — nay,

He was not of an age, but for all time,

and Plato or Pliny were of as much account in his soul, as Robert Boyle or Sir Humphrey Davy. — But in his heart of hearts, there was no place for a human being out of his own family.

“I scarcely envy you, Ju!” said I, when, on reaching London with the father and daughter, I discussed the matter with Mrs. Herries. “You will have an anxious task of chaperonship. — Jane is handsome, rich, gentle, in every way attractive. You will have a swarm of wasps settling on the forbidden fruit.”

“*Why forbidden?*” demanded my matter-of-fact sister “My father assures me it is Danby’s wish that his daughter should marry early.”

“That is, Lord Ormington is himself anxious that Danby’s daughter should marry early, in hopes that Danby, left alone, may be induced to find a wife in his turn. But trust *me*, both father and daughter will be difficult in their choice.”

“They have a right to be so,” replied Mrs. Herries, proudly. — “She is to inherit a noble fortune, and with her many charms and qualifications, ought to command one of the best matches in England.”

“May it fall to her lot!” — said I, sincerely. “Jane

Danby is one of the sweetest creatures in the world. Still, she always brings to mind Sir Brooke Boothby's pathetic epitaph on his only daughter: "the unfortunate parents ventured their whole stock of happiness in this frail bark and—"

"Not a word more!" — cried Julia, starting up, and flinging down her work. "I defy auguries! — I have the utmost faith in the auspiciousness of Jane Danby's star. — By the way, I thought her rather pleased last night with Lord Rotherhithe, who took her out at the opera."

"Not a word more," cried I, in my turn, "if you wish me to have any faith in your auguries or the understanding of my niece! Rotherhithe? — That stupid, ungraceful, ungracious piece of mechanism, from which one is half an hour in extracting a word, and another half hour in trying to understand it!"

"I dare say I am wrong," replied my sister, "but they certainly seemed to find no lack of topics of conversation. At all events, do not put her out of conceit with Lord Rotherhithe, for whom Herries has the highest esteem. His manners may not be so polished as those of his brother Frank, who, by living among actors and actresses, *roués* and *femmes légères*, has rubbed off the *mauvaise honte* which obscures the good qualities of Rotherhithe; but he is fifty times more to be relied on."

"More to be relied on by Herries, perhaps," muttered I, as I left the room: perfectly aware that my pompous brother-in-law was a creature regarded by Walsingham only as a good subject for his quizzeries. — But I own I was surprised at Jane's bad taste, — for my sister was an observer whose accuracy might be strictly relied on.

Meanwhile, I was not a little amused by a change of men and measures in Connaught Place, almost equalling the displacements occasioned in Paris by the glorious three days. — All the family connections of the late Lady Susan, all the personal friends of my brother, became assiduous in their attentions, now she was "out," to a girl of whose existence they had heretofore seemed ignorant; and it was curious enough to see Danby, the philosophical Danby, gravely examining invitation cards, and enquiring into the merits of Almack's, very much as he would have spelt over De Lolme on the British Constitution, or studied a protocol. Nothing was beneath his notice that regarded

the interests of Jane. He gave her Lady Susan's diamonds; — he *intended* to give her Lady Susan's fortune; — which mattered the less, since Nature had already endowed her with Lady Susan's sweetness and truth.

Among those by whom the *débutante* was beset with civilities was Lady Grindlesham; and I noticed that Danby carefully abstained from uttering a sentence of condemnation in his daughter's presence; upon any of her new acquaintance not morally objectionable; allowing her to exercise a taste and judgment of her own. — I fear I was not equally forbearing. I could not always help exclaiming, — "Dear Jane, I hope you don't like that fussy manœuvring Lady Grindlesham?" — or "Jenny! — don't let me hear you own that you have patience with Lady Harriet Vandeleur!" Jenny sometimes put up her pretty lip at my petulance; though on the whole I was an immense favourite. — With her, I never played the coxcomb. I was only a good and affectionate uncle, proud of her beauty, and eager for her happiness in life.

A month had elapsed since her presentation at court; and though entering into the diversions of London after Lady Grace's fashion, soberly, Miss Danby had been the observed of all observers at several brilliant balls of the season; when one morning, on coming down to breakfast, (a meal which, as my brother was in the habit of receiving political visits at that hour, his daughter usually took in her dressing-room,) I was struck as I opened the dining-room door, by the sound of my own name. A folding Japan screen, always standing before it, compelled me to hear a few words addressed by Lord Ormington to his son, which instantly raised the leaven of my indignation.

"Just as you please, Danby," said the old Lord. "I should have thought your cruel experience on the subject, might have opened your eyes. But I tell you again, if you allow that man to remain an inmate under the same roof with your daughter, you will repent it the longest day you have to live."

It could only be of *me* they were talking. The demerits, however flagrant, of the butler, coachman, or footman, in Connaught Place, could be productive of no great evil to Miss Danby: and it was consequently against myself that Lord Ormington was recommencing the malignities which

he and the old brute Coulson had concocted together in former days. — I might have heard more, could I have stooped to the baseness of listening ; but I was so moved by the generous warmth with which Danby burst out into advocacy of his brother, that I entered the room my cheeks glowing with pleasure rather than rage.

Lord Ormington looked like an old *ganache*. He seldom looked like anything else ; — and like Faulconbridge, I had often thanked heaven on my knees, for not condemning me to a resemblance. He soon, however, rose and sneaked away to Hanover Square ; and the moment he was gone, I frankly acquainted Danby with my overhearings, and my determination to instal myself in a home of my own. — My income was a good one : I had, in fact, abided under his roof chiefly as a satisfaction to himself.

“ There seems almost a fatality,” replied Danby, deeply mortified, “ in the circumstances constantly arising to produce estrangement between us. I am not a man of attestations, Cecil ; yet I appeal to God in confirmation of my assertion, that there exists not a brother more tenderly attached to brother, than I to you. The very circumstances which alienate you from Lord Ormington, endear you to me ; for, still my brother, I regard you as injured on the threshold of life ; — and fraternal regard is in our case only quickened by this deeper sympathy. — Do not in return for this warm affection,” said he, (*et via vix tandem voci laxata dolore est*), “ resent upon *me* the slights of others. — You would grieve me beyond measure by quitting my house. — Your companionship is a relief to me, — your presence a pleasure and protection to my girl. Lord Ormington’s unreasonable complaints this morning arose from an idea he has taken into his head, (or which has been insinuated by that old man of the sea, Coulson !) — that you are surrounded here by your *roué* companions, who might form disadvantageous acquaintances for his grand-daughter. — He is not aware that my house is too little attractive to procure such visitors ; and that even you, Cecil, see enough of these luccioli at your Clubs, to dispense with them elsewhere. In short,” said he, suddenly extending his hand (and so cordially, that had I been anything but an Englishman, I must have pressed it to my lips), “ in short if you do not wish me to think of

you very differently than I have ever thought since you were fifteen, do me the kindness to forget that there is a folding screen to my dining-room, and that you unfortunately overheard what was never intended for your ear."

I complied, — *provisoirement*, — (as the French bury their dead, and build their opera houses;) but resolved, at some propitious moment, to cut short our domestic connection.

Meanwhile, the malice of those two old men had succeeded in embittering the delight of my connection with my niece. A sort of vague apprehension, — grounded perhaps upon the realization of their prophecies concerning poor little Arthur, — convinced me that I should become an innocent cause of evil to her; and now, whenever she approached me with the gay frankness of a cordial nature, which saw in her uncle an object of affection unmingled with the respect that subdued her tenderness for her father, I recoiled from her with assumed reserve. — I often said harsh things to her, — I was abrupt, — ungracious, — disobliging. — And without effect! — All I got by it was an exclamation addressed in an audible aside to Mrs. Herries of — "Cecil, at least, does not spoil me. — Cecil tells me wholesome truths; — and I like him the better for it! — He is so candid, — so true. One is always sure there is no *arrière-pensée* in Cecil."

In reply, Julia would smile at her enthusiasm; for my sister was fond of me too, in her way. But unluckily she was so adoring a wife, that the gigantic proportions assumed by Herries in her imagination, threw a colossal shadow over the rest of the creation. My merits consequently lay in the shade; and since Herries had thought proper to cumulate with his public occupations the private duty of becoming my conscience keeper and investigating my predilections for my neighbours and my neighbours' wives, I had so fretfully raised my quills at him whenever we met, that he retreated like a terrier after its first attempt to worry a hedgehog. — Still, in spite of our estrangement, his wife loved me too well to enter into any Ormingtonian cabals against my peace.

"My brother does indeed deal frankly with you!" she would reply, — patting her pretty niece on the shoulder, — "But I advise you, dearest, to moderate your enthusi-

asm when talking before strangers. — In mixed company for instance, where everybody does not know you to be uncle and niece, and his fine person and showy appearance bring him almost too nearly to a level with your age to make the connection probable, — do not call him ‘Cecil,’ or allow him to call you ‘Jane’ — nay, ‘Jenny,’ as I heard him do the other night before Lady Grindlesham to her horror and amazement. — I must own, too, that I think your father wrong in allowing you to be seen riding in the Park, alone with my brother. — ”

“Attended by our two grooms,” interrupted Jane, — “and only when my father is detained at the House, and comes later to join us. But surely it would be sacrificing too much to the whims of such people as Lady Grindlesham, were I to give up the society of my own uncle, and the innocent pleasure of a ride, merely because there may be people looking on in the crowd who are not aware of our relationship? What does the world give one in exchange for such unreasonable exactions?”

“A great deal, — and in exchange for very little, — as you will learn to estimate such sacrifices to the usages of society when you grow older and wiser,” replied Mrs. Herries, sententiously.

“Cecil, (I beg your pardon, MY UNCLE Cecil) — was saying the other night,” observed Jane, with an arch smile, “that custom is a despot of our own creation, like the Gods which Grecian sculptors carved out of stone and then fell down and worshipped!”

“Say rather the sovereign of an elective monarchy,” said Julia mildly, — “elevated to the throne for good and sufficient reasons, and deserving respect from the moment of his coronation.”

All that Julia obtained by her lectures was, that Jenny “*Uncle Cecil*”-led me to distraction in the public, whenever I had offended her. — But so far from diminishing in affection, she became kinder and more endearing than ever in her manners and deportment; for I suspect that her father had given her a hint of the animosities of which I was the object, and entreated her to make my home agreeable to me by all the means in her power.

The means in her power, God wot, were manifold. — She was as fine a musician as Miss Vavasour; — she read

French, English, Italian, and German, not as a Kemble, a Rachel, a Schrödér, or a Foscolo would read,—but as an angelic well-taught Englishwoman reads in her husband's library, while the brute is snoring on the sofa after a hard day's hunting and pretending to listen.—She talked charmingly,—that is, with the freshness of a young mind hovering like a butterfly over the flowers of this world, and fancying itself the first to discover their brightness and sweetness. But she listened more charmingly still;—and though there were many inner foldings of my existence which I knew better than to unclothe, I had a thousand things to tell her about Portugal and Italy,—Sicily and Greece,—very interesting to *her*, though much too simple for the sophisticated Public I have the honour to address; which cannot eat its sole without sending to Japan for the pungent condiment of soy, or swallow the honest roast mutton of its ancestors, without a filthy deluge of Lopresti's sauce.

What pleasant mornings we used to pass in that cheerful drawing-room, with the sun bringing forth the aroma of the geraniums and verbenas, till they filled the air with freshness;—what pleasant afternoons in the ride! Saladin stepping out as proud of Miss Danby's Little Taffine, as I of its graceful rider!—And the pleasure was certainly reciprocal. She often said she was never so happy as with uncle Cecil.

I beseech any gentleman of my years who finds his ears tickled by a declaration of this nature from the lips of a pretty girl of seventeen,—whether kinswoman or alien, to set himself instantly the task of discovering in what manner or by what chain of communication, he is serviceable to the interests of her secret *penchant*. “Nothing,” says the French Solomon of the eighteenth century, “so closely resembles friendship, as the intimacies we cultivate to serve the interests of our Love.”

I did not suspect that I was playing catspaw to Jane,—she did not suspect it herself; but the inspirations of the Blind God who deceived *her*, enabled her to deceive Uncle Cecil.—I had no grounds for suspicion. She was merely civil to young Chippenham; and the only man she *seemed* to distinguish was Rotherhithe, of whom I was certainly no advocate. But it was impossible she could like such a fellow as that!—Hannah More herself would not have



been moved by the two-and-two-make-four sort of courtship of the prosy, matter-of-fact Viscount!

All this time, my brother was luxuriating in the national prospects, — no, not the national — the human-natural prospects, opened by the accomplishment of Parliamentary Reform. — The world seemed to have grown wider to the hopes of so pure a philanthropist as Danby. Still, he “rejoiced with trembling;” as all wise men rejoice in a world where Providence, for its own great purposes, does not always allow effects to keep measure with their causes.

One had certainly heard enough and to spare for the foregoing eighteen months, of the “critical state of the public mind;” — and I fancy ministers stood in hourly terror of their places. But at that moment, alas! one began to hear for the first time of “the critical state of the public body;” till people were one and all in abject terror of their lives. — Ambitious Russia had brought back from the East more than she bargained for. — The Cholera was now an auxiliary of her armies; and having once set foot in Europe, was striding from capital to capital, as Napoleon’s eagle is said to have perched from steeple to steeple, on its flight to Paris from Marseilles.

It was an awful crisis. — The cry of “the Plague!” had been so long silent in the Western world, that our terror of that fearful scourge was become a matter of almost forgotten tradition; and modern physicians are so bebaroneted and beknighted, — wear so many Orders and issue their own with such an air of omnipotence, — that, under shelter of the College, one had begun to fancy oneself immortal. Yet at the announcement of this fearful malady, — this death of agony and disfigurement, — the College itself grew white as its own magnesia, — confessed its ignorance, — and implored the aid of Parliament to enlighten its understanding and assist its measures.

Parliament, of course, did wonderful things, — called out “murder,” — or the militia, — or the metropolitan police, — or whatever Parliament calls out, when it gets into a funk; ay! and would continue to call out, were the great comet to approach, which is to destroy the world and both their new Houses.

But it was not Parliament alone which put on its considering cap. — The rich became suddenly solicitous about

the state of the poor : — not because rebuked by the approach of judgment to come, but because misery was supposed to be the nest-egg of this brood of death. A poor family in one's neighbourhood was now a serious consideration. The little blue noses we had thought only disgusting when the result of cold and hunger, became implements of destruction when connected with the idea of the Cholera. — The very beggarwoman who asked alms of us, might approach us with malice prepense. — There was infection in her tatters ; and she had evident intentions of assassinating the man of twenty thousand a year by collapse, the sickly infant in her arms being an accessory before the fact.

WE were determined, however, that the indigent classes should not work their wicked will. — In foreign countries, the populace rose in many cities where the Cholera prevailed, protesting that the authorities had poisoned the cisterns and wanted to kill off the superfluous population. — In England, the *rich* arose, (in England, it is always the rich who rise, — in parliament or elsewhere !) and protested that the lower classes wanted to Cholera them in cold blood. But with the aid of magistracy, they were luckily enabled to put down this diabolical attempt, — as the Times used to call such things when it was in the habit of calling names. They whitewashed the cottages, — they flannel-petticoated the old women, — they inflicted worsted stockings over the barelegged, — they drenched the starving poor with mutton-broth, they filled the hungry with good things. — Blankets were forced upon the inmates of hovels by piquets of dragoons, and the Riot Act was read whenever some wretched hamlet refused to be clothed and fed.

If any one of our English artists had possessed a spark of genius, he might have designed a better parody upon Holbein's Dance of Death (which those who have not admired at Basle, have seen in the engravings of Hollar,) showing forth the Great people of Great Britain, beguiled into the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, by the influence of the Cholera Morbus ; a Marquis terrified into lavishing chaldrons of coal, — a Duchess panic struck into a dispensation of fleecy hosiery, — a Baronet convulsed into an emission of Welsh flannel.

All was consternation. Nothing was talked of but the Cholera. — Cajuput oil obliterated all memory of the oil of the sacred Ampulla; — and instead of distresses of the heart, the young and fair stood in awe only of pains in the stomach. Strawberries were carried aloud in the street and no man regarded; and when the more fatal fruits came into season, a handsome reward was offered by Gunter, Grange, and the united fruiterers of the metropolis, to the first man bold enough to attack an apricot: — yet even in the Spanish legion, no such hero was to be found! — Good eating was accounted a bad thing, and French cooks were at a discount. An entrée was voted *felo-de-se*; and, like Katherine the shrew, we were all shrieking to Grumio for beef and mustard, or even “the mustard without the beef!”

In the sequel, we escaped better than other countries, thanks of course to our benign physicking of the poor. — Like the whipping boy kept to spare the delicate shoulders of King Jamie, we made them our scapegoat. — Victims there were, however, — some good, — some lovely — still and ever to be remembered with regret!

For my own part, I plead guilty to the very deuce of a fright: —

*Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit,*  
every time I read in the newspapers the announcement of some new case.

The greatest bore of the whole business, however, was the premature departure of my brother's family for Ormington Hall.

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Le voilà qui se passionne pour un son de voix, pour le frémissement d'une robe, pour tout ce qu'il n'entend qu' à demi, pour tout ce qu'il ne fait qu'entrevoir. Pour cet heureux observateur des infiniment petits, il existe une obscurité plus favorable que le grand jour.*

*Quis accuratè loquitur, nisi qui vult putidè loqui. — SENECA.*

I TRUST that not even the least courteous of my readers, (in the last century authors were obliged to call their readers courteous, just as in Austria the bond-woman is still compelled to address the uncivil free woman as

"*gnädige Frau*" — but this is a longer parenthesis than is allowable to any writer short of Walter Scott,) — I say I trust none of my readers have been discourteous enough to imagine, that because I have made my fair Countess cede the *pas* for a whole chapter to a débutante of seventeen, I had foresworn my allegiance.

If I have dismissed Lady Mereworth from my pages, she was as much as ever in my thoughts. My total desoph-istication was another affair. — The woman who had rejected me from her heart, I had a right to reject from my memory. I banished *her*. — The Vavasours had no claim upon my recollection otherwise than as people out of my orbit, whom I had made the mistake of unsphereing myself to seek, to their detriment and my own.

But I owed myself to Lady Mereworth, — albeit the debt might be little to her credit.

By remaining in England, I was acting in obedience to her commands: and consequently as her recognized slave. If, instead of feasting on beccaficos that winter, I contented myself with humble partridge, — if, for *Lachryma Christi* I swallowed London particular, — if, for the glories of St. Carlos I accepted the desolation of Drury Lane, — it was all because *she* had compelled me to "REFUSE" the invitations of her husband. — However, I knew the extent of my sacrifice,

\**Lætius est, quoties magno sibi constat honestum!*

The usury laws do not, I trust, affect the measure of interest one may choose to exact in payment of a pretty woman.

And her hour was approaching. "The Countess was hourly expected home." — If the old porter in Grosvenor Square were to be believed, the Mereworths, who had spent the spring as well as winter abroad, were hastening to England to celebrate the accomplishment of Chippenham's majority. The Earl, though a prudent conscientious man, had not found force of mind to resist the turmoil of Reform. It had required the utmost expenditure of his strength to bring his courage to the point of joining the Reformers; and the measure once carried, like women who sink and die after producing a son and heir, his strength had given way.

From the moment the mob began to break the windows

of his opponents, *he* began to shudder at the idea that his own plate glass might have been in danger; and when settled abroad, beyond the reach of my brother's mild expostulations, but not beyond reach of old Votefilch's tedious epistles or the denunciations of the Post, he grew so nervous and bewildered, — so apprehensive that the country was going down hill at a gallop, leaving him answerable for having neglected to fasten on the drag, — that Lady Mereworth, terrified lest he should commit himself with his party, if on the spot, prevailed on him to remain abroad for the re-establishment of a constitution somewhat shattered by the late debates, foul air and foul language, of the House, under the mephitic influence of THE question. It was for this, she had ordered herself to be ordered abroad; well aware that no *Englishman* ever submits to expatriation on the score of health, unless in the last stage of a consumption.

They were now on their return. Instead, therefore, of fleeing from the face of the Cholera, as Jane and Danby earnestly implored me, I abided in London to await the coming of the Mereworths; and the heat of that sultry summer, scorching the pavement to a temperature which might have put the genius of Chabert the Fire King, then in his glory, to the proof, combined with a temperament holding in solution quicksilver and saltpetre in equal parts, — worried me into a high fever, long before I saw the announcement of the arrival of "The Ariel schooner, to join the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes."

Twelve months had elapsed since I beheld her: and, twenty years before, — when the world of beauty lay before me like a sunny meadow before a child, who, kneeling on its starry grass, plucks up the white daisies as fast as his hands can grasp them, and fancies himself able to string together a daisy garland, long enough, like Robin Goodfellow's girdle, to encompass the earth—twelve months would have contained the germ of twelve thousand infidelities.

But at my present age, twelve months was as a day! — With the exception of a foolish flashy Frederica Gray, — a dowager Miss of nearly my own standing, who all but insisted upon marrying me, — and a pretty Viscountess of whom more hereafter, — I had undergone no *very* desperate besiegement. And now that the critical hour

of our re-union was striking, I had nothing, or next to nothing, on my conscience.

I could not forbear, — since neither club or coterie would detect and crow over my weakness, — from re-passing in my memory, as an actor runs over the words of his part previous to appearing on the stage, — those halcyon days of the preceding summer, when I was satisfied to watch from the fauteuil in which I was lounging, the gentle form of Lady Mereworth inclining over her work; — and listen to the mild discourse reflecting her tranquil soul as the cloudless sky pictures itself on the unruffled surface of a glassy lake. — Her movements were so noiseless, her gestures so serene, that, as one expects through the stillness of an autumnal day to hear the sound of the falling leaf as it droppeth lightly from the tree, — one felt even a passing glance from *her* as if an act of meaning and exertion. — Oh! how she must long to enchant me again with one of those glances, — how long to soothe my spirit and her own with the blandishments of —

But my Public is not in love; and I have no right to expect it will enter into my blissful anticipations.

To talk Goetheisms to the fashionable readers of the day, is like describing to the clerk of some wholesale warehouse in Aldermanbury, (who sees by candlelight nine months in the year, and for running brooks enjoys only the water-pipes of the Grand Junction,) — of dew-sprinkled meads, — the gossamer on the thorn, — the squirrel on the bough, — the smoke curling from the thatch of some wood-embosomed roof among the venerable elms or sturdy oaks of the hoar forest. — *He* knoweth not the rustling of the leaves, — the fragrant dews of even, — the snatches of song speaking the reveillée of the woods, or snatches of light glimmering among their mossy branches; — and it is “the very fiend’s arch mock” to tantalize his metropolitanized nature, with images of beauty he can as little apprehend as the pavement of Cheapside the freshness of May-dew!

I can distinctly remember, even now, the perturbations of the week I waited the coming of the Mereworths! — Few but official people, who could not help themselves, remained in town, — looking ghastly as Trappists, from fear of the Cholera; while I, on the contrary, was “blush-

ing celestial rosy red," with happy anticipations. — The Morning Post kept announcing that "the Earl and Countess of Mereworth, after a sojourn of twelve months on the continent, were hourly expected at their family mansion in Grosvenor Square;" and little did the legion of devils, begrimed and black with printer's ink, who set up the paragraph, conjecture that the fairest covey of Cupids ever hatched under the dove-like wing of Boucher, never evoked sensations so ethereal as those five-and-twenty miserable words!

At length, the grimy imps were pleased to convert "expected" into "arrived," — The family coach, looking, as family coaches usually do on their arrival from Dover on a summer's day, like some conventual penitent arrayed in sackcloth, dust, and ashes, really made its appearance; not as it quitted home, spruce, black, varnished, adorned with a lady's maid with golden ringlets and a green veil, and a well fed footman, red, white, and unctuous as a Yorkshire ham, weighing down the rumble; — but containing, in addition to my lord and my lady, a *tambour* full of *lingeries* and lace, a whisking, frisking, little *femme de chambre*, and a ferocious Calabrian, — half chasseur, half courier, — colossal and hirsute as the ogres of that pre-utilitarian epoch of literature when fairies and giants were articles of nursery belief; — or as the effigies of Albert der Bär, in some Tedescan armoury.

When I made my appearance next day at the door, the old porter was mechanically about to admit me, when this brute shouted from the foot of the stairs that miladi was not "veeseebeclee!"

I condescended to mention my name, as a Prince of the Blood of Prussia names himself at the Brandenburg gate of Berlin, instead of exhibiting his passport; whereupon the giant in green and gold consulted a list which he drew from his pocket, and coolly reiterated his intelligence that Lady Mereworth was "invisible." I longed to examine whether the list of favourites were inscribed in the same precious handwriting which had compelled me to "refuse" the courteous invitations of poor Mereworth; — but I was too indignant for words. My only comfort was that the quiet old porter who, for the last thirty years, had been ensconced in the leathern chair of

the hall, like a Colchester native embedded in its shell, looked quite as angry as myself at this foreign invasion.

As I was able to calculate to a second the time at which Mereworth would take possession of a chair and the Globe newspaper that afternoon at Brookes's, I managed to be in readiness to hook myself to his arm as he proceeded homewards; rightly conjecturing that the broad flagstones would prove an irresistible attraction to a London man, returning from a year's exile on the ill-paved continent. — As we proceeded together along Albemarle Street and Berkeley Square, he told me all I knew already, — that they had passed the winter at Naples, Easter at Rome, and the four subsequent months at Paris, — and were now going to light bonfires and roast oxen at Chippenham Park, in honour of their first-born; and in return for the docility with which, though a Master of Arts, I submitted to hear the alphabet recited, when we arrived in Grosvenor Square, he forced me in with him. On my pleading an indispensable engagement to render him more importunate, he insisted on my "seeing how Theresa was looking after her journey."

I was too much absorbed in my own sensations to notice the face of the Patagonian Calabrese, as his padrone escorted me up stairs. — I even experienced the sort of agonizing difficulty of breathing endured by all who have ascended the heights of Mont Blanc, Topocatepetl, or even the vulgar altitudes of the mighty Helvellyn; — and was conscious of a vision of rushing clouds before my eyes, as described by those heroes of romance and reality, who have accompanied the "undaunted aeronaut Mr. Green" in his ascents from Vauxhall Gardens. — I doubted very much whether I should see clear enough to make my way towards the well known north-western angle of the drawing-room which contained the shrine of my idolatry.

Resolved, however, that no woman should boast of having triumphed over the self-possession of the CECIL of Cecils,

*Stetit aggere fultus*

*Cespitis, intrepidus vultu; meruitque timeri*

*Nil metueus,—*

I pushed boldly forward; but instead of finding it necessary to attain the sofa in order to receive the welcome of that fairest but most indolent and least demonstrative of



her sex, Lady Mereworth advanced to meet me, — with the eager courtesy and pliant series of salutations, with which a Frenchwoman in the excess of her civility, puts you out of your ease. — She offered me a chair, as if I should not have taken one as a matter of course ; and inquired after my health with a methodical and unmeaning phraseology that brought the family apothecary and my other Theresa cruelly to my recollection, — that is, *not* my Theresa, but Madame la Comtesse de St. Gratien.

Instead of giving me time to utter a syllable of the charming things I had brought with me, as one brings a *cornet* of sugar plums on New Year's Day, the Parisianized Countess burst upon me with one of those explosions of chatter, which induce one to flatter oneself of having discovered the perpetual motion between the lips of some lovely *machine à babil* of the Faubourg St. Germain. — She was charmed and in despair, — horrified and enchanted, within the space of two minutes and a half ; — agitating all the time her embroidered handkerchief and silken ringlets, and indulging in those exaggerations of word and deed, which too often convince one that when an Englishwoman catches the fever of French affectation, she has it of a more virulent kind and with greater certainty of disfigurement. — *On m'avait gâté ma bonne, — ma simple — ma douce Thérèse !*

But it was possible that a sojourn of only four months in the City of Frivolities could have effected this unaccountable transformation ? — Alas ! the mischief had been twelve in accomplishing. Uprooted from the sober habits of her life of routine, Lady Mereworth, on the Continent, was like an infant released from a go-cart and trusted to run alone on the brink of a precipice. The state of her lord's health had necessitated constant amusement. She had been doomed (by men privileged by virtue of a black coat to give bad advice) to surround the hypochondriac with society ; and the society thus assembled surrounded *her* with flatteries and adulation. It was twenty years since Lady Mereworth had been assured she was charming ; and now, she heard of nothing else, and was almost amazed into believing it !

By the time she arrived in Paris, her gentle habits of reserve and occupation had given way to the flutter of spirits produced by a perpetual round of company, — a

perpetual glare of light, — a perpetual estrangement from that better self who pores with us over a book, — listens with us to the murmurs of the summer wind, — and gazes with us at midnight upon those myriads of glittering worlds that whisper from the starry sky the infinite littleness of human nature.

Introduced at once into the heart of the choicest society of the Faubourg, Lady Mereworth was startled by the unreserve with which she was adored, and the piquant frankness with which she was assured that her *toilette* was *affreuse*, and that she must be remodelled from head to foot.

When a foreign princess is brought into France to become the bride of the Sovereign regnant and expectant, the first token of adoption given her on the frontier, is to dismiss her old attendants, reject the wardrobe she brings with her, equip her from head to foot, and surround her with a Parisian household. — Precisely similar are the evidences of good will evinced by the fine ladies of the Faubourg towards any Englishwoman of sufficient note to be judged worthy of de-dowdification and demoralization.

Quiet inexperienced creatures like Lady Mereworth, unaccustomed to be thus attacked and thus cajoled, — as some timid girl suddenly surrounded by a camp of gypsies surrenders the whole contents of her purse to escape in peace, — are often content to wear and bear all that is imposed upon them. But too often, the pleasure of being assured that the effect of all they are wearing and bearing is *ravissante*, that they are no longer recognizable, — that they have suddenly acquired the cestus of Venus, — that for the first time in their lives they are all they ought to have been ever since they were born, — puts them sadly in conceit with their newly acquired adjuncts; — and they return to parade in triumph in London the dress and habits they have assumed as a penance on the banks of the Seine.

The Countess was attired in the extreme of Parisian fashion, and consequently appeared to English eyes *merveilleuse* and ridiculous. It is very possible that she attached no more importance to her present eccentric ornaments than to her former simple style of raiment. But to me, to whom all she wore was new and peculiar, there was an air of effort about both her dress and manners, singularly displeasing. Though she assured me that

during her stay in Paris the prevalence of the Cholera had suspended all society, I could see from the curl of her hair and plaiting of her frills, that she had been listening to all those false and flattering protestations which her graces of person and dignities of estate were as sure to call forth, as the sunshine to elicit the sickly fragrance of the orange blossoms of the gardens of the Tuileries.

After contemplating for half an hour her newly acquired graces and fanciful costume, I saw my way out so clearly on quitting the room, that I could have decyphered a diamond edition: and so far from finding my respiration impeded, could have performed Rode's variations, on the flute, without injury to a demi-semi quaver.

Of all the "Victoires et Conquêtes" of the French for the last half a dozen centuries, this conquest over the simplicity of my Beatrix was the most humiliating to my Anglican pride!

That evening I met the Mereworths at a little party at one of the ministerial houses, still open; and was forced to confess, that, if no longer to be worshipped as an angel, Lady M. had become a more agreeable mortal by the liberalization of her views and expansion of her courtesies. — As a mere member of society, she was far more acceptable; — had more to say, said it better, and had the grace to appear more interested in the sayings of other people.

After long sojourn on the Continent, how often have I been struck by the dowdy look and prudish manners of that *pécore*, — that *Minerve manquée*, — Madam Britannia!

Our fastidious writers of travels in America may be as witty as they please upon the prudery that causes the belles of New York to encase the legs of their pianos in pantaloons, talk of the limbs of tables, and recoil from allusion to any inner article of clothing; but many of the affectations of Great Britain appear fully as provincial and narrow-minded to that preponderating continent of Europe, to which she affects to give the law in all questions of Ethics and Philosophy, because able to make cheaper calicoes, and tax a wider extent of colonies for the cultivation of her indigo and coffee!

But this is neither here nor there.

The fine ladies of Whitehall Place first whispered among themselves that Lady Mereworth was the greatest

object they had ever beheld; and almost in the same breath, implored her for the pattern of every article of her dress. — But she took no note of their absurdity. She was giving to Frank Walsingham and myself an account of all the oddnesses and incongruities rendering the new Court of the citizen King so much more amusing than any other Court under the sun or moon; and ended by inviting us both down to Chippenham Park, to assist her in doing the honours of her fêtes to her country neighbours.

I was angry with her for inviting us *both*: — I was almost angry with her for inviting *me*. — Luckily, Frank was at that moment called away by Lady Brettingham; leaving me to whisper, as whisperingly as I could, — “Are you sincere in asking me? — Am I not on *this* occasion also to — REFUSE?”

The Henry Seyton of Scott’s “Abbot,” when accosted by young Avenel with arch sayings comprehensible only to his sister Catherine, could not have looked more utterly blank than my fair Countess! — Was this English obtuseness, or Parisian audacity? — Resolved to satisfy myself, I pushed the question so home as to leave no doubt upon my mind that she had forgotten every syllable about the matter.

“I, at least,” said I, — in a tone of *calinerie* of which I trusted the Faubourg St. Germain must have ~~known~~ her apprehensive, — “have a more retentive memory; and the book of the Coronation Service on which you deigned to inscribe the only command you ever did me the honour to address me, and the only one which could have rendered obedience irksome, remains treasured among the few possessions which I will only resign with my life!”

“Are you jesting with me, Mr. Danby?” inquired Lady Mereworth, thoroughly off her guard, and in her own old natural manner. — “I never made you a request in my life, except to dine with us occasionally; and certainly never inscribed one on a book of any kind.”

“Will you give me leave to produce it to you to-morrow,” said I, — “and thus convict the imperfectness of your recollections?”

“With all my heart,” — cried she, and so cordially, that I saw I was under some grievously erroneous impression of one kind or other.

I have a great mind not to go on. — It is not a pleasant

thing to know that I am about to be laughed at as the most miserable of coxcombs, by the hundred and fifty thousand persons, who, the circulating libraries inform me, constitute the reading public of the memoirs of CECIL ; and though I may pretend to throw the stone at myself, and utter the first laugh, as, —

l'anima ciascuna  
Sua passion sotto 'l contrario manto  
Ricopre, con la vista, or chiara or bruna.

At least fifty thousand of the hundred and fifty, will see through the hollowness of my mirth, when they learn that the pencilled characters I had been treasuring so fondly were traced by the hand of Lady Grindlesham — who had changed books with my Countess in the Abbey ; that they were addressed as a jest to an official friend, rejecting as “REFUSE,” (s. not v.) the silver medal handed to her in lieu of the gold one, for which, by similar writ of pencil, she had issued her claims to the Master of the Mint !

I have every reason to believe, at this present writing, — now that all my illusions are laid like dust at my feet by tears of time and trouble, — that Lady Mereworth never for one moment regarded me otherwise than as a good natured harmless coxcomb, an old friend of her husband, who — ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> gossip soothed her ear as she sat at work, like the tinkling of a sheep-bell, and who was always ready to rush forth and call her carriage at the Opera or Almacks, —

Tum vertice nudo  
Excipere insanos imbres, cœlique ruinam !

Her red eyes had been the result of catarrhs, — her pale cheeks of indigestions. — I was a “pyed ninny !” — I had utterly, *utterly* deceived myself !

What had my coxcombry done to fate, that it should receive such a box on the ear as was conveyed by this humiliating conviction !

## CHAPTER XVII.

Dic mihi, si fueris tu leo, qualis eris ? — MART.

Anon out of the earth a fabric huge  
Rose like an exhalation with the sound  
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet. — MILTON.

It is written in history that Demophontes the butler of

Alexander used to shiver in the sunshine and transpire with excess of heat on a frosty morning;—a rare exception.—I, too, I suppose, am a rare exception,—for not only

I'm never merry when I hear sweet music,  
but I am never so wildly vivacious as when stung to the quick.

I am not one of those who, (like the widow's heart after receiving a small gratuity,) *sing* for joy. I always sing when I am angry. An old madrigal which the blind fiddlers of the London streets have rendered popular, dismisses "care" as "dull," when in fact its very essence is restlessness—sleeplessness, and irritation. Ease is dull, care is lively and vocative as a grasshopper. I beg to assure my Public, that I was the very life and soul of the festivities that took place a fortnight afterwards at Chippenham Park!

It has often occurred to me that these solemnities to commemorate the coming of age of sons and heirs, somewhat resemble the gilding of the horns and enwreathing with flowers, of a goat or lamb about to be led to the sacrifice,—or the bridal dress adorning a fair victim on the day she pronounces her vows of either matrimony or perpetual celibacy.

Poor lad!—poor thoughtless young man!—While his future tenants are drinking his health in strong beer, and the fairest damsels of the county on tiptoe for the honour of being chosen to open the ball with him,—while he smiles his affable smiles, and returns thanks in a neat and appropriate speech which he holds in the crown of his hat, fairly engrossed by his tutor or the family chaplain,—like the nun or bride, he is about to renounce for ever the pleasant pastimes of his youth.—As the tresses of the novice are cut off, the vanities of life are about to be shred away from his noddle. Romance is over for him,—reality beginning.—He is henceforward responsible to the laws.—He must pay his debts,—he must make no vague promises of marriage. A citizen,—a beast of burthen,—a mark for taxation,—a target for the shafts of misfortune,—for *him* the blossoms of life have already begun to shed their leaves,—leaving bitterly apparent the germ of a green and tasteless fruit, or the thorns clustering round the stem of every human destiny.

Poor Lady Mereworth thought of none of these things. — Happier and prouder than a queen, her whole heart shone out in the looks of delight she fixed upon her handsome young son, as he received the compliments of his county. It was evidently the brightest day of her life. I had done her injustice. Paris had not so corrupted her nature as to weaken the influence of that strongest of human ties.

Oh, Eve! — Mother of mankind! — (to counterbalance the execrations lavished by centuries upon whose memory, the Catholics doubtless invented their worship of the Mother of endless benedictions,) — if fertility were indeed assigned to thee and to thy daughters as a penance, (which the participation of the innocent brute creation in the evil, renders a matter of doubt,) richly hath Providence counterbalanced the suffering, by the exquisite closeness of that holy tie. — Mother and child, — child and mother, — constitute the only unimpugnable and indisputable relationships of this world; — and the beatitude which Murillo and Raphael impart to the countenance of the Madonna, is but a transcript of the features of many an earthly mother, holding her first-born child in her arms, and intensely conscious of the joy of that exclusive and enrapturing tenderness.

While I watched Lady Mereworth infatuated by the graceful deportment of her son, I forgave her foreign footman and fantastical soubrette!

My friend Mereworth took it more gravely. Human nature is human nature; and severe entails are apt to engender sentiments in the nineteenth century, which, were new tables of the law conceded to mankind, might probably require a supplement to the fifth commandment, making it as eternally penal for noble parents not to affection their eldest son, as for the offspring of parents in general not to honour their father and their mother.

An eldest son is a natural enemy created to all men of landed estate per virtue or vice of feudal statute. — Seldom does it happen for an heir in tail to attain his majority without occasion for so gross a violation of natural law, as to have favours demanded of him by the author of his days!

I know not what it was that Mereworth had to ask of his son; whether to cut down timber or cut off entail, or increase or diminish mortgages. But I saw clearly that the rejoicing with which the Earl rejoiced over the roast-

ing of the oxen and the broaching of the old October, was fifty degrees less joyous than that of his wife. — The man was before him who was to fill his place; the man to whom every day that *he* lived formed a diminution of power and pleasure. — It requires a considerable stock of merit both in the parent and child, to keep out of sight this bitter fruitage of the laurels of paternity. — The woman's pride, derivative alike from husband or son, — experiences no change, and apprehends no danger from the event, — but the father whose elder son is in parliament, has already a Mordecai sitting in the King's gate.

The neighbourhood of Chippenham Park, meanwhile, which for years had been preparing its best bib and tucker for this family celebration, found almost as much cause for displeasure in the foreign changes effected in the Countess and the establishment, by the sojourn of the family on the Continent, as Mereworth in the transformation of his son-passive into his son-active. — All the steward's rooms and housekeeper's rooms within ten miles round, rose up in insurrection at the idea of Christian servants whose names were neither Jack nor Jill, and who could speak no English; and we all know the influence exercised in England by that august class of the community, whose subterranean exhalations are fatal as those of the Grotta del Cane. —

Verso pollice vulgi  
Quemlibet occidunt populariter!

I look upon a regularly organized *Chambre Basse* in a lordly mansion, as a sort of invisible galvanic battery, the wires of which, harmless to the eye as bell wires, convey an electric chain and a series of shocks, through every cranny of the house.

The Squires and squiressees, Baronets and baronetesses of that part of the country, accordingly, looked as suspiciously upon poor dear Lady Mereworth, as if she had brought the infection of the cholera in her Parisianized garments; — and there was a certain want of cordiality in the fête, which would have ended in a decided *fiasco*, but for the noble spirit of young Chippenham and the elegant urbanity of Cecil Danby. — Our united efforts availed to put matters *en train*.

Very few people appreciate, unless by experience, the amount of such efforts requisite to produce even a moder-



ate degree of emotion in any well-bred assemblage of the Great British. — The French generals who, every now and then on the retreat from Russia, on requiring a brigade to advance, and issuing the word of command again and again without result, — perceived that half a dozen battalions of the men under their command were stark and stiff, frozen to the spot, like so many molds of Gunter's fresh strawberry, — may have experienced the sensation. But it is a thing which, like the effort of addressing the House of Commons, or singing a cavatina in the French opera house, must be felt to be apprehended.

And this is the very thing the English are proud of! As the peacock, when admired for its plumage, is apt to solicit further laudation by a screech, our loving country people are sure to put forward for praise what they call their solid good sense, — that is, their imperturbable phlegm! — It may be a safeguard. — The times we live in are rattling times; and between the influence of railroads and balloons, — Lucifer matches and Prussic acid, — we should perhaps be tunnelling our way to the Antipodes and finding out some North-West or other illicit passage to Hades, but for the preventive check of our holy and wholesome national apathy, the great drawback-duty of the realm: thanks to which, we are Europeanly admitted to be the most steady and the least ready of the colloquial nations of the Old or New World.

With respect to our conversational deficiencies, however, I have a theory of my own! — The superior wittiness of the French had evidently its origin in the despotism which created Versailles, and put the press in irons. During a couple of centuries, the bon-mots that enlivened the petits soupers of Paris, would, had their authors written as they talked, have necessitated an enlargement of the cells of the Bastille; and the habits of emitting these parlous squibs and crackers in conversation, originated a tone of small-talk which, in England, took the shape of the Draper's Letters, the Two-penny Post-bag, and the periodical literature of the day. — There is not half the brilliancy in the *causeries* of Paris since the liberations of the revolution of July; and I suspect that it needs only to transfer a right *earnest* adaptation of the Hanoverian laws to Great Britain, to make Marylebone talk as Fon-

blanque writes, or stimulate the dinner tables of May Fair with the pungent grains peppered over these animated pages. The English are (between me and them) stultified by their liberty of the press.

From Chippenham Park, I was to proceed to Ormington Hall; and could perceive from the hints of the Mereworths, they were anxious I should invite their son to bear me company. Nothing could be more awkward than the dilemma in which I was placed by this intimation. — I would not have encroached on Lord Ormington's hospitality in favour of so much as a guinea pig, to which he had not issued a formal invitation; yet I was almost as reluctant to admit to my friends the Mereworths, the limitation of my power in this particular.

I was resolved to give Danby a hint to get Lord Chippenham properly invited; but would not in the interval excite the suspicions of the family by announcing my intention.

This was all the harder, because the Mereworths had allowed *me* carte blanche to invite my friends to their recent festivities; and Frank Walsingham, among others, had actually accompanied me to the house.

Not but that such a fellow as Frank bore his own letters of recommendation to any society he might happen to join. Wherever he made his appearance, it was like sunshine in winter, like a new book in quarentine, like one of Charley Buller's speeches after one of ———'s stammers.

He sang, he talked, — laughed at other people's talking, and did *not* laugh at their singing; — he was equally ready to be amusing or amused. There was nothing solid about Frank; none of those valuably phlegmatic sobrieties to which I have been alluding as the natural atmosphere surrounding the moral excellence of Great Britain; but by cheating the sad out of their sadness, and the rigid out of their formality, he rendered an important service to society. — I do not pretend to say he was a man of genius; but I am apt to judge of causes by effects. — The battle of Minden was chiefly won by a regiment raised by General Elliot among a strike of discontented tailors. But the victory was not the less a victory; though the tailors had ceased to be tailors. After hearing Frank Walsingham keep a table of parliamentary men, and others of the sages of the day in a roar, I always forgot that he was a dunce.

Unluckily, he was apt to make his friends roar with sorrow as well as mirth. Frank was a perpetual getter into mischief; and not only did wrong things, but did them in the wrong way. — If engaged in a spree, it was sure to find its way into the newspapers; if on his knees before some actress or dancer, the curtain drew up and discovered him, — figuratively speaking, let me add — lest the public should have a fit of matter-of-factitude. His priggish brother, Lord Rotherhite, used to undergo fifty-two martyrdoms per annum through the publicity of poor Frank Walsingham's escapades. — The women, however, "looked in his face till they forgot them all." — I should have been very sorry, even in my Emily Barnet days, to have hazarded rivalry with Frank.

On arriving at Ormington, I had reason to wish he had accompanied me, — for we were sadly in want of a cheerer. — The death of Scott, of whom Danby was a personal friend and correspondent, threw a damp over the fireside he had more than once brightened by his intelligence, and warmed by his cordiality; and Jane, who could of course fully enter into the blank created in the soul of her father by such a loss, was glad to escape from the saddened circle, and assail me with thousands of questions touching the gay party at Chippénham Park.

I was as much startled as pleased by the frankness with which she cross-questioned me concerning the way in which Chippenham had acquitted himself. — In *my* time, girls were slyer or more reserved. It struck me that Helena Winstanley would never have examined Sir Moulton Drewe concerning *my* exploits at Edinburgh, in the cool decided manner in which Jane, while sauntering arm in arm with me through the home wood at Ormington, allowed herself to talk about Chippenham Park. — It is true, she mentioned the name of Rotherhithe quite as often as that of my friend Mereworth's son and heir. But *that* was evidently a blind. — It would have been as possible to attach a tender sentiment to one of the figures on the clock of St. Dunstan's, as to Rotherhithe. — Though, Heaven knows! — There is no accounting for tastes: —

Sua cuique quum sit cogitatio  
Colorque privus.

— Madame de Stael fancied Rocca, Rousseau Thérèse,

Byron Marianna. — But no! — it was impossible that a graceful gracious creature like Jane, could fancy a man whose only recommendation on the face of the earth consisted in the number of acres thereof, over which he was eventually to exercise his droits territorial.

Still it was strange that, unless she *did* like him, she should be so much concerned at the annoyance he must be feeling at an exposure which just then took place, of one of the public scandals too often involving the name of his brother Frank. — As Jane truly observed, the respectability of the old Earl of Walsingham and his better-conducted son, had to suffer in general estimation for the delinquencies of one who seemed to take as much pleasure in getting into scrapes, as others in getting out of them.

The present exposé arose out of an affair of far from recent occurrence. A suit at law between a celebrated actress and her husband, had produced recriminations and the publication of letters; among which, those indited by Frank, six years before, in his boyhood, were paraded before the public. — The letters of all boys are ridiculous, — the love-letters of most men are ridiculous; and those of poor Frank consequently displayed a double dose of absurdity. Moreover the lady to whom they were addressed, though young and pretty when the heroine of my friend, was now *passée* both in appearance and public estimation; and the figure cut by Frank Walsingham was consequently absurd as well as disreputable. — As Jane observed, the mortification of his family must be complete.

Not that a girl educated like my brother's daughter had either perused the letters, or become aware of the true state of the case. But from the dinner-table-chat at Ormington Hall, she learned that Frank had been disgracing himself in some very public manner; and certain passages of the letters, which were cited in the papers and had become proverbial for their absurdity, were frequently quoted in her presence. — I could not but agree with Jane that my friend Frank must have been the cause of great annoyance to his sober brother; and, like herself, almost wondered he had found courage to show himself on an occasion so very public, as the festivities at Chippenham Park.

The truth was that this courage did not proceed from audacity, but from a genial joyous spirit, over which the

*qu'en dira l'on* of society had little influence. Aware that the folly in which those letters had their rise was a boyish weakness, long since repented and atoned, the exposure scarcely concerned him more than if attached to some other person. — The Frank Walsingham of nineteen *was* in fact a different man from the Frank of five-and-twenty ; and the Frank of five-and-twenty too sunshiny a fellow, too happy and happy-making, to trouble his mind whether Bloomsbury turned up the whites of its eyes at his early backslidings, or even whether his moral brother Ro—the Joseph Surface of the family, judged it necessary to address a letter to his constituents, assuring them that “a son of the Earl of W—ls—m alluded to by the Sunday papers was not *the* son who had the honour to represent them in parliament.” Jane Danby perfectly approved of her protégé Lord Rotherhithe’s protest. For *my* part, I felt that in this instance, as in all others, he acted like a prig.

I could not help telling her one day, that it would cost me a pang to bestow upon her the benediction of an uncle, when she knelt at my feet as Viscountess Rotherhithe ; a threat which the gypsy presumed to receive with a conscious blush, not accompanied by a smile, as if she attached very little importance to my opposition !

Aber was ihr sanftes ange spricht  
Sängen selbst Petrarch und Sappho nicht !

There was, however, some excuse for the toleration with which Jane endured even mention of such a lover ; for truth to say, the neighbourhood of Ormington Hall afforded the very type of Great British provinciality. — As Danby had once irreverently observed in my presence, the nearest approach to a Corydon was forty years old ! — But the forty of a hunting Baronet, who hunts hard, drinks hard, and breathes hard after drinking and hunting, is not the forty of a well got up London man, who looks clear-starched as his own shirt, and whose waist is as slender as his means ; — and the Sir Gerald Moseley in question, *animalâtre* as he was, was perfectly assimilated with his neighbourhood, which was that of a hunting country in all its odiousness and inde-fence-ability.

The twaddling at the dinner-table in Connaught Place

was, — compared with that of Ormington Hall, as the liveliness of the mill-wheel to the stagnation of its pool. — Remote from any high road or commercial town, the district did nothing but hunt one half the week, and talk about it the other. Its jovial county squires, and *their* aristocracy the country Baronets, (including poor Helena's father Sir Gabriel, the red-nosed Nestor of the field,) were men who appeared to have been born in leathers and deserved to be buried in them: — (and why not, pray, if Knights Templars of old were inhumed in the coats of mail attesting their prowess?) — But by Jove! there was as much difference between their sportmanship and that of Belvoir or Cottesmore to which *I* was accustomed, as between a dinner at the table of Lord Sefton, and a gobble at that of the Lord Mayor!

As to myself, I possess, under such circumstances, the happy faculty of self-concentration; and can film over the brightness of my mind as parrots the brightness of their eyes, while boored or bored to death among people who indulge in local jokes incomprehensible in the next parish, and dig one in the ribs in order to point their meaning.

With serene complacency did I accord my ear to any amount of squirearchical brag they chose to inflict upon me; but I own I *did* wonder, when the Mereworths and their son came by Danby's invitation to spend a few days at Ormington on their way to Heaton, that my niece should so little recognize her good fortune in exchanging the red faces and tuneless voices of those uncivilized suppressors of the fox, for the lively and graceful manners of one of the finest young men in England.

Boys, however, have seldom much success with an intelligent, discriminating girl. — Jane was too much accustomed to the good sense of her father and the good manners of her uncle, not to perceive a certain want of self-possession in Chippenham's air and ideas, which necessarily inspired her with notions of her own superiority. — Now, though a woman of the world, such as Clémentine de la Bélinaye, may be aware of her advantage in superiority over her husband, the affections of a girl, like the fibres of the ivy, flourish by ascent; and require the support of a superior object to sustain their growth!

Lady Mereworth was as angry with me as her gentle

nature would admit, for insinuating to herself and her husband, that a proposal on the part of Chippenham would be premature. — It was not for *me* to tell them in the plain words, as odious in our land's language as its plain cooks, "Jane will certainly refuse him!" — But I advised him to "take time;" — and to recommend time-taking in love-making to a warm-hearted lad of one-and-twenty and his adoring mother, is much like advising a pistol, when drawing its hair trigger, to reflect seriously previous to explosion.

I was amused to perceive that, if Chippenham's society proved less attractive to my niece than might have been expected, Ormington Hall appeared to *him* a bower of bliss. — Oh! exquisite bewilderment of the soul, which had formerly converted Southampton Buildings for *me* into Grosvenor Square, — and didst then invest for poor Chippenham, those eating, drinking, snoring, knights of the kennel, with the graces of mind and person of Ariosto's knights, — why — why, must every fleeting year bear off upon its wings a hue from the prismatic charm reflected from thy burning lens upon the dreariness of human life!

Oh! could I only fall in love again, or find a bottle of claret to my taste! — Make the most of your time, boys! — Etonians and Ceritonians, clap your hands and rejoice, while ye can; —

Gather your rosebuds whilst 't is May!

Enjoy, while the sun shines, that best of wisdom which old folks are fools enough to call folly!

Never do I turn from reminiscences of my early Cecilian bliss, when the happy moments dropped from my hand like pearly drops from the braided hair of a sea nymph, reflecting sunshine as they fell, — to make war upon Time as I now behold it, dull, heavy, cumbrous as a President of the Council, — without recalling to mind the laborious efforts of another hapless criminal, condemned to a task equally overwhelming: —

Και μὴ Σίσυφον εἰσίδον, κρατερὸν ἄλγε' ἔχοντα,  
 Λαλὴν βασταζόντα πελαγεῖον ἀμφοτέρησιν.  
 Ἦτοι ὁ μὲν σπινθηριζόμενος χερσὶν τι ποσὶν τε,  
 Λαλὴν ἀνὰ ὠθεσκὴ ποτὶ λοφόν, ἀλλ' ὅτε μάλ' οἱ  
 Ἀκροῖν ὑπερβαλεῖν, τοτ' ἀποστρεψασκε Κραταίης.  
 Αὐτίς ἰκνύτα πέδονδ' ἐκυλινδύτο λαας ἀναιδῆς.

# ° CECIL, A PEER,

A SEQUEL TO

CECIL, OR THE ADVENTURES OF A COXCOMB.

BY

THE SAME AUTHOR.

"LOCUS EST ET PLURIBUS UMBRIS,"

"A frame containing sketches of the world and its wife."

HORACE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA :

LEA & BLANCHARD.

1842.



PHILADELPHIA :  
BARRINGTON AND HASWELL,  
PRINTERS.

# CECIL.

---

## CHAPTER I.

Eccoti, benigno lettore, un parto di poche sere, che se ben nato di notte, non è però aborto di tenebre ; ma si farà conoscere figlio d'Apollo, con qualche raggio di Parnasso. — NICOLINI.

Get money, — money still,  
And then let merit follow — if she will. — POPE.

BLESSED be they who, for the benefit of the younger brotherhood of this glorious and favoured island (*cheers from the Treasury benches!*) keep open house at their country seats from Christmas till Easter.

That year, and many years succeeding and preceding, did I manage to get rid of myself at the cost of my own time and the venison of my noble friends, the Earl of B —, and the Duke of A —, and so forth, to whom it was essential during the hunting season that their dinner table should be surrounded by well-known faces, reflecting honour and glory upon their fare and fair. — Blessed, I say again, be they who, at a season of the year when other capitals concentrate their population for social enjoyment, — defying frost or rain in crowded theatres, or brilliant ball-rooms, whose blazing illumination supplies the deficiencies of sunshine, — offer premiums for the encouragement of attempts at sociability in some isolated castle, posted like a dunce in disgrace, for example sake, on the top of a hill ; where people, eat, drink, hunt, and shoot, at the expense of their entertainer, repaying him on their return to town by filling the clubs with attestations of the merits of their entertainment. I really do not believe

it cost either the Duke or Earl much more than twenty thousand a year a piece, to have it said in London that their country house was not a bore.

I had now progressed to the time of life when one becomes conscious that such masters of country seats deserve well of their country. — No longer young enough to be put off by the groom of the chambers with a smoky room, or dressing-room near the offices within sound of smoke-jacks, or smell of Jacks who smoke, — no longer young enough to be made a target for the attacks of pretty women or witty men, — no longer an object for practical jokes, or practical earnest, I had progressed into one of the walking gentlemen of such parties. — I was CECIL, — *there* to be amused, not to be amusing ; — CECIL, whose arrival looked well in the newspapers, — CECIL, with his own particular room, — his own particular chair, — his own particular vintage, — the protégé of stewards, butlers, and housekeepers ; — the Mr. Danby against whose arrival a particular buck was set apart by the gamekeeper ; — the Mr. Danby who enjoyed among the housemaids the privilege of a certain number of extra jugs of hot water per diem ; and during whose stay the breakfast bell, per connivance of the servants' hall, was rung half an hour later than usual.

All this was pleasant enough. My club seemed to tour it out of town with me, in my easy chaise. Still, one must not hope to *cumuler les bénéfices dans ce bas monde* ; and I admit that, if sure of a better bed-room and calmer repose under its curtains, I was by no means so certain of depriving the pillows of others of their rest, as in the times when I was put up among the cubs of Bachelor's gallery.

Well do I remember how every night when the female kind had shut up their work-boxes, and were retiring from the drawing-room, the last look cast from the door by one or more of that bevy of fair faces, invariably singled me out, like a *dear* from the herd ; — and delightful it was to snatch up a book or newspaper, to conceal my observations and emotions from the brothers, lovers, husbands, around me ; all jealous, — all mistrusting me, — all grinding their teeth, or muttering between them,

Quo teneam vultus mutantem Protea nodo !

And then, on coming in to breakfast—ten minutes later than the rest of the party,—to observe the number of chairs pushed aside to make way for me;—the number of faces blushing the invitation they dared not speak;—the number of eyes cast down on their tea-cup or muffin when I had deigned to make my election, in order to conceal their looks of mortification or despair!—The manœuvres, too, when there were meets on the lawn;—the stratagems to be crossing the hall when I had talked of being home early from shooting!

And now,—my place at breakfast was regularly assigned by the butler near the fire, and out of the way of draughts; and when I took it, every woman of them looking me smilingly in the face, and asking me how I had slept,—feeling as little delicacy on the subject as in alluding to the sleep of the spaniel on the hearth-rug!—As to meeting me in the hall, if some stray girl or graceful matron *did* occasionally rush towards me and lay her hands detainingly on the arm of my shooting jacket, it was sure to be to ask whether Frank Walsingham had had good sport, or whether I had left Chippenham near the house?—So far from finding occasion for concealing my face at night behind the Morning Herald, a bijou almanack would have secured all the blushes likely to be called into my checks by the Parthian darts of those retreating beauties!

All this, however, at least consolidated the commodiousness of my country quarters. I excited no jealousies,—I created no dissatisfactions. I was asked from house to house. One invitation foretold another, and one engagement certified another.—I glided in like a shadow.—I amalgamated like a medium tint with old or young; and thus perhaps enjoyed the summum bonum of middle-aged human felicity.

But alas! the greatness of my reputation stood my foe.—People would not let me subside quietly into innocuousness. The young fellows kept reminding me that it was absurd to degenerate into the slippered pantaloon, so long as one boasted such a leg for a boot;—and *would* persist in calling me “old fellow!” a term of endearment never hazarded to fellows really old.

After all, perhaps I *had* no right to withdraw myself so

early from active service. Potentates who abdicate prematurely, are apt to yearn in their retreat after the sceptre they have renounced. — It was too soon for egotism; "*Jouir, c'est la sagesse, faire jouir, c'est la vertu*;" and let the *Instruction Publique* say what it might to the contrary, I was always virtuously inclined.

In consideration, therefore, of my duty towards the public, — the fairer moiety of course, the other half can take care of itself, — I resolved, if no longer worthy to frisk as a subaltern in Cupid's corps of light infantry, at teas, to figure as a field officer. — Says I to myself — (as Cardinal Richelieu did when he gave away a *placé*) I will make a thousand discontented and one ungrateful. — "*Connubio jungam stabili*." It is high time we should marry. — Let us look out for an heiress.

It is a singular circumstance, that, though the modest virtues have neither a place in the Court Guide, nor any other list of the notabilities of fashion, everybody keeps a catalogue of heiresses. — A sort of club census determines the existence and whereabouts of this valuable portion of the female population; and it needed only to hint the question in St. James's Street, to be furnished with a list like a house agent's memorandum of HOUSES TO BE LET FURNISHED. — I swore, of course, as people used aforesime when on the look out to purchase a seat in Parliament, that I was commissioned by a friend; and was instantly assured that my friend would find the very thing to suit him in the only daughter of a Lady Crutchley, — the widow of an East Indian K.C.B., — whose vast personality and noble mansions in Bruton Street and Tchindagore Park were waiting to make some unlucky dog the happiest of men, — *i. e.*, a man of ten thousand a year.

I promised to mention her to my friend; and Cecil Danby accordingly thanked me that night as he was winding up his watch, in no measured terms, for my prompt attention to his interests.

There was no great difficulty in getting presented; and already I had determined to afford the heiress of Tchindagore an opportunity of disposing of herself to the best advantage. Miss Crutchley was no longer in her *première jeunesse*, (as one says when one wants to be civil about a dowager miss, who, like Flora Gray, has almost survived

her second,) — and was what is called an amazingly fine woman ; a phrase usually intending to designate a woman whom it is amazing any one should call fine, inasmuch as she is singularly coarse. Her name was Marcia ; and like her namesake she “ towered above her sex ; ” but though the premises were alarming, the giantess subsided into a pocket Venus the moment I betook myself to arithmetic and un-common sense for admeasurement of her charms.

The virtuous Marcia was not a person to be had for asking for. — She had been asked for too often not to suspect that, in this unproposing age, the adoration to which she was perpetually subjected was that of the Molten Calf. — Suspicion, however, (and “ suspicion’s at the best a coward’s virtue,”) did not tend to improve either her temper or complexion. Even her bloom was redolent of Lombard Street ; and though

*Lærida præterea fiunt quæcunque tuentur  
Arquati,*

it is not pleasant to see one’s rose blush like a primrose, or the chick of one’s heart look like a guinea chick ; though by the way, Messrs. Delcroix and Atkinson might perhaps inform one the variety of shades of complexion compassable by the pin-money appropriate to ten thousand a-year.

It was not, however, the complexion of the heiress that put me so much to the blush. — Though her manners were free from vulgar assumption, there was a frigid calculating self-estimation about her, — a sort of if - from - ten - thousand - a - year - you - take - ten - thousand - a - year kind of process perpetually going on in her mind, that deadened its better faculties. But for the ten thousand-a-year, I suppose one should have troubled oneself little about her faculties, dead or alive ; but

*Inde faces ardent, veniunt a dote Sagittæ.*

She reminded me of the rock called the Ara Bacchi, in the bed of the Rhine, which one salutes with respect because visible only when the river is low, the season dry, and the vintage promising. — People were glad to see her, because corn, wine, and oil were in her train.

In more respects than one, however, did she resemble the said altar of Bacharach ; he was as hard as a rock ! There was a poor relation living in the house, a little girl of sixteen, called Mary — (Thompson — Johnson — Brown — Smith — I know not — she was only called Mary,) whose business it was to pick up Lady Crutchley's pocket handkerchief, open the door for the Dutch pug, read the newspaper to the old lady, and write notes for the daughter, — whom the virtuous Marcia invariably addressed in a spirit of nigger-driverishness worthy of Richard Greysdale. — The poor child did not seem to mind it ; — a proof only that she was used to nothing else. — It was no business of mine ; — *my* business was with the banker's book of the heiress.

I had fully expected, in derogating to the society of an East Indian widow, to find myself thoroughly *désorienté*. — But to my great amazement, I discovered, on occasion of their first grand dinner party, that half the fine gentlemen of White's were beforehand with me ! and half the fine ladies, their mothers or sisters, enlisted in the same shabby cause. — I met at Lady Crutchley's the best company in town. Like Lovegold, in our English version of L'Avare, they agreed with me in exclaiming, "In short, Lappet, I must touch, touch, touch, something *real* !" — Like any other Golden Image whose worship is attended by the sound of sackbut, harp, lute, psaltery, and all kinds of music, multitudes were bowed down around the heiress !

Meanwhile, I had put my intentions into effect of removing from Connaught Place, on pretence that the distance from St. James's Street was inconvenient ; and was now proprietor of a snuggerly on the wrong side of St. James's Place ; where I could hear the sparrows of the Green Park twitter so distinctly, that, prospered in the exercise of my imagination by living opposite to Rogers, I managed to fancy myself overlooking Constitution Hill.

The only method by which I could reconcile Danby to my change of domicile, was to dine with him whenever I was free from other engagements ; which, sooth to say, was seldom the case. — But when I *was* able to join the family party, it grieved me to perceive that paternal anxieties were making more havoc in my brother's constitution, than all the labours of his public career or cares

of his private. — It was passing strange ; but Danby, who had taken such pleasure in his daughter's education as a preliminary to the part she was now playing in the world, seemed to find nothing but thorns in the garden of roses he had been cultivating.

Whoever approached his lovely daughter, became a source of trouble to him. — *He* knew the peculiar delicacies of her nature, — the refined elegance of her mind ; and trembled every moment lest by those assiduities so fascinating to a very young girl, her affections should become entangled by some person not every way worthy to become her companion for life. — Readily perceiving that Chippenham was little favoured, he resigned with a sigh the hope of a nearer alliance with the Mereworths ; — but *who* was to be the man ?

Herries was the very fellow to stimulate these paternal susceptibilities. Issued of an official family which, from generation to generation, had risen from doorkeeper to clerk, from clerk to secretary, from secretary to commissioner, from commissioner to M.P. and Privy Councillor, the character in which my brother-in-law now figured in the Treasury Annals, Herries was troubled with a sort of hereditary legislative fever, inspiring him with the notion that the affairs of individuals, as well as of the nation, could not be too closely tied up with red tape, and deposited in tin boxes. — His idea of human life was a series of documents ; and he seemed to fancy that if Danby desired his daughter to marry either Chippenham or Rotherhithe, he had only to give notice of a motion to that effect. — With sufficient whipping-in, a division would decide the question.

Whenever they met, therefore, which was oftener than ever in consequence of the maternal care bestowed by my sister Julia upon her niece, Herries kept harassing his brother-in-law with hints about Sir John This, or Captain That, and begging him to keep an eye upon the attentions of a detrimental like Frank Walsingham. On any other subject upon earth, Danby would have been urged to all eternity without degenerating into the meanness of mistrust. — But on this, his heart and soul were “tremblingly alive all o’er” to the perils and dangers encompassing the



transition from maidenly to matronly estate, in the being most dear to him in the world.

Who would love her as *he* had loved her? — Who would watch for her, — pray for her, — as *he* had watched and prayed? — Who encompass her path with guardianship, lest at any time she should dash her foot against a stone? — From her very childhood *his* eye had been suffused with tears whenever her own were moistened; trembling when she approached the verge of danger, and rejoicing with exceeding great joy whenever a remote prospect of good brightened for her in the distance. — What husband would do all this? — What man *deserved* to be her husband, among the frivolous sensualists or interested egotists of the day? — poor feeble beings, — defective in head and heart, — and deriving their charm from some accidental grace of manner, or a judicious selection of tailors and perfumers!

“If you do not want to see your daughter throw herself away on some empty dandy, who will give her an opera dancer for rival, or waste her fortune at the hazard-table, beware the wild companions of your brother Cecil!” — had been the warning of Lord Ormington.

“If you do not wish to see your poor Jane devote her affections to the vizard found by *Æsop’s* fox, a good-looking face without a particle of brains, beware of Frank Walsingham!” — was now the more explicit admonition of the officious Herries.

And Danby thus appalled, not only refrained from inviting poor Frank into his house, but was perpetually bringing home Rotherhithe to dinner, upon the suggestion of Julia and her husband that, the two brothers never frequenting the same society, to establish the Viscount by his fireside was certain banishment to Frank.

The banishment, in the present instance, was copartite: for Cecil made his bow as well as Walsingham. — The arrival of the elder brother was just as great an annoyance to me, as the departure of the younger. — I admitted that Danby had a right to exercise his judgment in the selection of his guests, but wished he would exercise his own judgment instead of that of Herries.

Repelled from Connaught Place by the presence of Lord Rotherhithe, and attracted to Bruton Street by the weighty

considerations attached to Miss Crutchley, I now saw less than I desired of my brother and niece. — Hear of them, I did, wherever I went. It was generally allowed that Miss Danby was the beauty of the season, — and her father the only man capable at that moment of throwing a golden bridge of conciliation over the great gulph seething and frothing between the people and the throne. Whether in club or coterie, — whether among the diners out who digest their arguments with their cutlets, or the droppers in who concoct wisdom or pass judgment from an ottoman and satin divan, like the Chancellor from the Woolsack or Bishops from the Bench, — opinion was unanimous in favour of the superlative distinctions attending the family of Danby.

Duly grateful for the general favour conceded to my brother and niece, I was not the less so from being aware that the first lustre shed upon the family name, arose from my own prominence among the oracles of fashion, — as the gilt figure-head of a noble vessel first strikes the vulgar eye, and gives a name to the more substantial structure.

Frank Walsingham often used to laugh with me at the sudden odiousness he appeared to have acquired in the eyes of my brother.

"Danby has not asked me to the house for months!" said he, one day, towards the close of the season. — "I dare say it is Ro.'s doing. Ro. cannot bear the familiar way in which I presume to approach his pedestal. — It don't much matter, — now that *you*, Cis, have cut the family concern, and that my brother has bored his way into the house, it is not a jot better than other family mansions where the cook is English and the conversation Greek to me. — So come alone to the rehearsal, — or we shall miss Malibran!"

Such was the man they fancied intent upon entangling the affections of Jane!

"If you could but imagine, uncle Cecil," she one day whispered to me, in her turn, as we stood together a moment at the Water Colour Exhibition, while Danby was inquiring the price of one of De Wint's fine landscapes, — "if you could but imagine how much less agreeably my life has passed since you left Connaught Place! — Grand-papa and my uncle Herries do not allow my father a

moment's rest on my account. I dare not mention any new partner before them, lest my grandfather should take down Collins's Peerage to investigate the origin and alliances of his family. If satisfactory, off he goes to aunt Julia; and Mr. Herries is instantly posted off to Arthur's, while grandpapa proceeds to Boodle's, to enquire into the poor man's habits and character! — Surely *every* girl is not beset in this absurd manner? — I am beginning to feel so *gênée* and awkward when any young man addresses me in society, from the certainty that Mrs. Herries will be cross-questioned on the morrow, and that my manner, if commonly civil, will give rise to one of these family discussions, that I feel no pleasure in a ball-room. — Fortune, family, politics, morals, every particular relating to any unfortunate individual rash enough to ask me to dance, is passed through the sieve; and did my partners only surmise to what an ordeal they were exposing themselves, they would sooner stand for Westminster or be ballotted for at White's!"

"Poor Jenny!" said I, — pressing her arm. — "She almost deserves it though, for preferring such a mule as Rotherhithe, to a high mettled racer like my young friend Chippenham."

"I do not happen to like Lord Chippenham," replied my niece, more gravely than was her wont, — "but I beg you will not therefore do me the injustice to suppose that ——"

Her father at that moment approached us; which might account for the faltering of her voice, and variation of her colour.

"To suppose *what*?" said I, — whispering almost as if addressing some idol of my own.

"That any friend of my uncle Cecil can be an object of indifference to *me*!" — rejoined my niece, in a hurried manner.

Poor girl! — the assurance was unnecessary. — I was fully aware of my influence over her opinions. — I only wish that my brother would have allowed himself to feel equally secure.

Fathers have flinty hearts, — no tears can move them, gasps Romeo, in his dying moments; and though loth to

coincide in any opinion contained in an emended edition of Shakspeare, I suppose we young folks are bound to say Ditto. But I will be hanged if fathers have flinty heads! — for you may hammer at them till the day of judgment without eliciting a spark. — The heads of parents, (which I appear to be dragging in like cod's heads, by the head and shoulders) resemble the retina of the human eye, wherein all possible objects are reflected in an inverted position. Scarcely a father or mother of my acquaintance but sees topsy turvy, in all matters connected with the destinies of their children.

Danby was certainly one of the ablest men in England. Nobody could doubt it who heard or read his speeches, though I have heard more than one well-drilled blockhead speak like Cicero. — Yet in the matter of his daughter, he was as great a goose as Brabantio. By inflicting Rotherhithe upon her as her *pain quotidien*, he was making her detest the Viscount as very dry bread indeed; and fret after her uncle Cecil's friend Lord Chippenham, from mere opposition!

I could not help saying as much that night at the opera to Frank Walsingham, as we sat together in the Omnibus; and though he only shrugged his shoulders in reply, I saw him raise his glasses towards Mrs. Herries's box, and fix his eyes upon poor Jane, full of compassion for a girl so tormented by the want of judgment of her friends!

---

### CHAPTER III.

Like to a wayward child, whose sounder sleep  
Is broken by some fearful dream's affright. — SPENSER.

—— Remove fera monstra, tuæque  
Saxificos vultus, quæcunque ea, tolle Medusæ. — OVID.

Dum potuit, solita gemitum virtute repressit. — IBID.

“ALL this, however, was not Magdeburg!” as Napoleon used to say of the compliments whereby he beguiled the unfortunate Queen of Prussia from the purport of the interview she condescended to seek of him in hopes of re-

gaining that precious fortress; — and I fear it will be only too apparent to my readers that I am entering into my niece's love affairs to avoid the discussion of my own.

I cannot say that it *is* particularly pleasant, after having figured as Pyramus to one or more of the prettiest Thisbes in the world, to find that one's better half is likely to conjoin as unsuitably with one's personal merits, as when on the stage by some blunder of the scene-shifter, half a palace is made to unite with half a hovel. — In earlier life, I was never desirous there should be a CECIL-ia. — One of us was enough! — But when, in occasional paroxysms of romance, I *did* conceive the possibility of sitting in an opera box, over the door of which was inscribed in golden letters

THE HONOURABLE MRS. DANBY,

the face of the fair creature, occupying the chair opposite me in front, was invariably that of one of Greuz's transparent darlings, in whose veins the circulation of the blood is perceptible, and whose mother-of-pearly skin would put a lily to the blush. — And for lily, to be obliged to read daffodil! — For that delicate Ariel of my mind's eye, to behold a stupendous creature wanting only a coronet of towers to form a fitting representative of the substantial Cybele, that mighty mother of cities and market towns.

I had not paid my court to Miss Crutchley many weeks, before I grew positively afraid of her, — and strange to say, equally afraid of declaring off. — She looked so majestically determined to have me, that I felt like Grildrig within the grasp of Glumdalclitch. — By the time I had been sitting half an hour in Bruton Street, I used to find my ideas becoming transfixed. I, so fluent, so colloquial elsewhere, had not a word to say for myself. Whether Lady Crutchley stalked in or out of the room, or whether Marcia smiled on me or frowned, made no difference in my emotions. Their air of lofty superiority froze me to the centre. — The only diversification of my unpleasant feelings was irritation to see with what insolence the haughty heiress flourished her golden ferule over the shoulders of little Mary, to whom none of them seemed to concede the sensibilities of a human being.

“ Mary, what do you mean by leaving the door open !”

“ Mary, what do you mean by letting the fire out !”

“ Mary, what do you mean by neglecting to answer that note !”

“ Mary, what do you mean by forgetting to wind the blue worsted !” formerly the only mode of addressing in which I ever heard the poor girl reminded of her existence.

On leaving the house, I invariably made up my mind to insinuate to lady Crutchley or her daughter the following day, that the habits of life acquired on the banks of the Hooghly could not be too carefully laid aside on those of the Thames ; and that it would be an act of Christian forbearance to treat the poor relative a quarter as well as they treated the Dutch pug.

But when the morrow came, and I bowed my way into the room, about as much at my ease as if clad in a suit of Milan steel, I no more dared broach the subject, than snatch a burning fuse from an ammunition wagon.

How *can* a man be at his ease, who feels ashamed of himself ; and how can a man be otherwise than ashamed of himself, who is sneaking heiress-wise ? I used sometimes to hesitate about looking even such a little humble patient thing as Mary in the face, after whispering to the majestic Marcia she was an angel. It was a capitulation of conscience ; and

Conscience doth make cowards of us all.

It has been said of that moral indigestion, (arising from the gluttony of our first parents over the apple of good and evil;) that it resembles the stomach, — of whose existence we are unconscious, till something is amiss. — Something must have been sorely amiss after getting up a sigh for a gaunt heiress of thirty-four, for my conscience was as uneasy as if digesting a porcupine.

But what was to be done ? It is very easy to *talk* of disinterestedness : but how is a younger brother, whose annual account at Delcroix's amounts to £120, and whose tailor's triennial bill defies the most remote surmise of payment, to dream of the domestic comforts of a well-ordered home, unless encumbered with a Marcia ? — What but heiress-martyrdom became the portion of such fellows as Cecil Danby and Frank Walsingham, from the moment the family boroughs, their hereditary safeguard, were

swallowed up in the parliament-quakes of schedules A. and B. — The provision created by the wisdom of our ancestors to secure the junior branches of the aristocracy from the evils of bill-paying and bill-drawing by the privilege of bringing in bills, had been wantonly annihilated by a few speculative philosophers, such as Danby and Mereworth, — as eldest sons, most incompetent judges of the exigencies of the case; and the consequence was that, Rigmarole being lost to Lord Ormington, I was forced to lose myself, by an alliance with Tchindagore Park.

Few men form a juster estimate than I of their personal consequence; for self-depreciation would be as great a piece of affectation on my part, as for the divinity of a temple eternally crowded with worshippers, to declare itself a false idol. — Through life the first men of the day have sought my acquaintance, — the first women of the day, my smiles. Names are up for my friendship as for the Steaks; and it has never been denied that, to entitle a man to be seen on the arm of Cecil Danby, he must be, as for a fellowship at All-Souls, well-born, well-dressed, and tolerably accomplished. — My heart, like the widow's cruise, has been always full; and at the time of which I am writing, I am convinced that, had I been appointed Viceroy of Nova Zembla, half the best fellows in town would have applied to get upon my staff.

Yet it was amazing how high those Crutchleys carried themselves towards me! — The old lady, with her bird of Paradise turban and an aigrette of uncut sapphires which her late husband, Sir Marmaduke, had torn from that of Tippoo-Saib, surmounting a visage as grim as the Inquisition, — used to receive me as if she expected me to perform three salams before her Begumitish footstool. — As to Marcia, her influence over my self-possession was so tremendous, that when, after *trôner*-ing at White's as King of the Coxcombs, I came grovelling into her presence, I seemed like Garrick playing Abel Drugger in the afterpiece, after paralyzing the audience as King Richard.

And all because towards *them* I had placed myself in a pitiful position! — Other people were privileged to treat me like a puppy, they to treat me like a dog. I know not whether they *did* despise me, but I fancied they did,

for I despised myself. And yet, though ashamed of myself, I dared not back out of the business. — I had incurred all the shame of an act of vileness ; and by cutting short the connection, should only be said to have been dismissed into the ragged regiment of Miss Crutchley's rejected suitors.

I persevered, therefore, though I own it was pain and grief to me whenever I noticed the dovelike eyes of little Mary fixed compassionately on my face, as much as to say, "*I may perhaps escape from my fetters ; but you, dear and unfortunate Cecil ! are about to make yourself a victim for life !*"

She was a pretty little soul, — that Mary, — fair and colourless, like the flowers that grow in some shady place. — Her voice was feeble, her step timid, her eyes moist, her hand tremulous. — She had evidently never had a day of happiness. — I know not whether she were clever, — I dare say she did not know herself, — for she had not been allowed leisure or liberty to think : — the poor relation having nothing in this world she could call her own, — not even an opinion. — The thing she probably liked best in the world was Mumpsey, the pug, as the only beast that did not snap at her. — Poor Mary ! — poor dear child ! — It was melancholy enough to see so fair a rose alone upon a hedge of thorns !

After all, one certainly cares less for women who are qualified to take their own part in the world. — Talleyrand was quite right when he decided to save the pretty feeble little woman, of the party who were to be *jété à l'eau*, and leave Madame de Staël to her fate, *parcequ' elle savait si bien nager*. — I cannot understand how a fellow is able to resist the timid look that appeals to him for aid and protection. — It is delightful to be able to confer happiness, — very generous people say that it is still more delightful to accept it. I suppose the obligations vouchsafed to me have been vouchsafed by those I did not love ; at all events, I had not undergone six weeks of formal courtship in Bruton Street, without discovering that the gentle, anxious glance hazarded towards me by Mary, from the table at which she was writing notes in the corner of the room, was worth ten thousand patronizing smiles such as those with which her lofty kinswoman acknowledged my salutations.



I have no doubt that Marcia was very much in love. — It was not likely she should be otherwise. But "*tel vrai que soit l'amour, il s'y mêle toujours un peu d'alliage*;" and I am afraid it was no small triumph to her to enjoy the privilege of setting her foot upon the neck of the universal conqueror.

Women were not organized by nature for independence; and the mere exercise of authority hardens many a female heart, which, if kept in becoming subjection, would remain as soft and soothing as *pâte de guimauve*. — Marcia was not only rendered obdurate by a long course of free agency, but evidently contemplated the retention of her iron sceptre in the married state. She seemed resolved, since fated to purchase a husband, to buy a submissive one. — For the matrimonial chain, with its inevitable weight and solidity, must either be borne in equal portions by the just division of affection; or hang heavier on one party than the other; and in an interested marriage each party naturally tries to fling the burden on the other. But I was luckily sufficiently wide awake to perceive the fate in store for me, and consequently precipitated nothing. — I have always been told that a long courtship is the most respectful, and I was consequently *very* respectful indeed. — "*Ohne hast, ohne rast!*" the device borne by the great Goethe on his seal ring, was my substitute for Ovid.

One morning, I was fairly driven out of the drawing room in Bruton Street by the tone in which my future mother-in-law, whom I regarded much as Henry IV. may have affectioned Catherine de Medicis, kept hectoring that poor trembling child about having neglected a cage of avertdivats she had been ordered to cover over in Miss Crutchley's dressing room, the evening before; — and as I well remembered that Mary's looks and mine had been curiously dovetailed at the moment the command was issued, I could not help fancying I might be the innocent cause of her forgetfulness.

Did my Public ever happen to observe the soft spaniel-like expression of eye engendered by a life of early dependence? — Towards her protectresses, the looks of Mary were never uplifted; but when by chance she glanced towards some merciful stranger whose compas-

sion seemed enlisted in her desolate fortunes, it was with the sweetness of those pale fragile looking flowers, insignificant and overlooked in the sunshine, which acquire from the dews of evening a grateful fragrance beyond all praise. — I dare say the poor girl was unconscious of the exquisite charm of her eyes; but I swear I have sat and watched one of those mild deprecating looks till they smote me with tenderness and remorse, as that of the “poor monk of the order of St. Francis” melted the susceptible heart of Lawrence Sterne; — the heart, by the way, which ought to have been entombed in some tranquil retreat, like Rousseau’s in the isle of poplars at Ermenonville, — instead of the crowded corner of a plebeian burying ground in the Edgeware Road. — It was bad enough to die in Bond Street! — Is Bond Street a place to die in? — excellent for selling bear’s grease or publishing CECIL, — but to roll its carriages beside the death-bed of him who described the death-bed of Le Fevre! —

But I am wandering from Mary, — with whom, all things considered, it is far more agreeable to abide.

I had quitted Bruton Street, as I was saying, in an exceedingly bad humour; and my cab not being at the door, I set off to walk to the Travellers, — as was *not* my custom of an afternoon. — I hate walking. I hate the streets. — They always seem as much surprised as myself to find me in them; — and I accordingly sauntered through the Square and up Berkeley Street towards Piccadilly, in about as amiable a mood as its Black Bear or White might exhibit, if forced upon the pavement. — When lo! as I reached the overshadowing, though alas! now stag-horned, elms of Devonshire House, a voice saluted me with “Halloo, Cecil!” — a salutation implying considerable audacity on the part of a voice unknown.

Scarcely three years my senior, yet old, cold, and withered, with chinchilla whiskers, and a coat manufactured — I suppose it knew where — but I could not possibly conjecture — Lord Harris came wheezing after me! — I can only say that if my outward man retained as few visible tokens of the Cecil of Ch. Ch. as he of Jack Harris, I would as soon be lying in St. George’s burying ground side by side with Lawrence Sterne!

It is amazing the influence exercised by a total change

of diet and climate on certain systems. At Carlton House and Windsor, Harris had been what Napoleon said he did not choose to be at Versailles, "*un animal à l'engrais, aux frais de la nation*;" pampered to the utmost, and Lucullusizing upon peacock's tongues, till every fibre of his frame was distended by plethora; and the sudden transition from this luxurious mode of living to the "tough and scorched mutton" of private life, had withered him as a December frost withers an Imperial plum. — His skin was flaccid, — his muscles relaxed. Every limb and feature seemed still in deep mourning for the finest gentleman in Europe, whose *cuisine*

Ab ovo  
Usque ad mala,

— that is from its *omelette aux huitres* to its *compôte d'ananas*, — was super-Apician.

From Court, Harris had been driven into honourable exile as an Excellency — I forget where: — by the look of him, some petty German court, consisting of a palace, an opera house and two dozen hovels, whereof the eating and drinking, that is the drinking and starving, had converted him, from one of the fat kine of Pharaoh into one of the lean ones; — and it was curious to perceive how utterly the insolence of the man had evaporated with his inflation.

It must be a vastly disagreeable thing to return to London after half a dozen years' absence, and find oneself fallen in public admiration, as from the top of the Monument to its base. — The hard, bold, dashing Jack Harris, to whom no man dared show his face unless its whiskers were properly groomed and appointed, — a supple-Jack kept by his betters to lay upon the shoulders of their inferiors, — the shrewd Sir John, — the man of orders and influence, — whose every breath was a trade wind, whose frown a frost, — to whom the Common Council wrote confidential notes and with whom ministers condescended to portocolize, — to whom Addresses to the throne were privately submitted and from whom re-dresses publicly implored, — the Mayor of the palace at Carlton House, — the Petronius of Roman punch, — the Walpole of the wardrobe, — the Chesterfield of pages in waiting, — *en un mot*, the mushroom to which the venerable oaks of the forest had

bowed their diminished heads, — was now merged in the million, a grain of sand in the human shoal, a speck of dirt in the grand muddification of human nature! — Oh! Agis, King of Sparta! — this world of ours hath been waltzing through the Lord knows how many dozen centuries and billions of miles, since the days when thou wert young; without being a jot the wiser for thy notable lesson!

I was amused to see that Harris knew not exactly how to take me. — He was not even in so good a social position to be exactly cognizant of the standard of mine. We had both fluctuated. Our relative standing, as patronizer and patronizee, had varied fifty times since we uttered our first sauciness to each other at Oxford; — and now that he was come from Mesopotamia or elsewhere, and, on entering his club, found himself receiving back with rigorous justice all the slights he had shown to others while parading his peacock's plumes in his days of jay-hood, he was no more able to determine whether the Danby of White's stood higher or lower than the Cecil of Waiters's, than whether cock pheasants or hen were just then preferred for truffling by the commander-in-chief of the casseroles of the reigning King.

The royal cottage was pulled down as useless and an eyesore; — so was Jack Harris! — It is the fate with most such temporary buildings. — "*Ce riant Marly*" was made to laugh on the wrong side of its marble mouth on the death of Louis XIV., and follow its royal master to the dust; while Kew in the corner became on the affliction of George III. as much a parable as Solomon's vineyard. — Every sovereign has his hobby, — destined to become a broomstick again, and be appropriately flung into the dirt, when the magic breeze of favour which lifted it aloft hath ceased to blow.

I thought it right to be civil to the broomstick, in the shape of Lord Harris. — To cut a man in so vilely-cut a coat, is, in our situation of life, much the same as for a Thomson to turn his back on a Johnson, in a ragged one. — Besides, there was no longer substance enough in him to bear cutting. Like Homer's gods and goddesses, he would have yielded to the slash, and reconsolidated anew into the same pretentious nothingness.

But what a bore for a man like me, at that moment rejuvenated by the breath of spring emanating from the sweet lips of my niece and little Mary, till I began to fancy that Time had made a pet of me and was forgetting to chalk my score among the rest, — to be cross-questioned concerning Votefilch, Falkirk, Mereworth, and everything else most round-shouldered in London, as though they were our mutual contemporaries!

"Do you remember, my dear Cecil," said Lord Harris, with excruciating familiarity, "how deucedly in love you were with that Lady Harriet Vandeleur?"

"Lady *Whom*?" said I, with an air of bland incomprehension.

"The pretty little Irish widow in Grosvenor Place, to whom you used to read Strangford's Camoens, and swear she had an eye of tender blue!"

To imply my utter obliviousness, I slightly elevated my shoulders. Impossible to confide to the brute that the pretty little Camoens-reading widow, was now the disputatious snarling old woman of Exeter Hall — (from force of habit I was very near writing it cathedral!)

"And poor Lady Votefilch, — (do you recollect Lady Votefilch?) — who used to have her sitting-gowns and her standing-gowns, and whom I and Mereworth, — (Chippenham then!) used to take such delight in tormenting to take a seat at one of her own soirées, when she was laced up for the dignity line of action."

"Lady Votefilch was a friend of the late Lady Ormington, though much her senior," said I, coldly.

"And that charming Marchioness of Devereux, who used to snub you so abominably! — What has she been doing with herself these hundred years? — One never hears of her now!"

"One never hears of Sir Arthur Wellesley, *now*," said I. "The Duchess of Ilfracomb flatters herself she has eclipsed Lady Devereux."

"Oh, ay! — I forgot," — said Harris, — evidently knowing nothing about the matter; for he had been living not only at the bottom of the basket, but so completely under it, that one must have been forced to shove it aside to find an insect so inconsiderable.

"But to be sure how everything *is* changed in London!"

— resumed he, after insulting me by a few more questions, tending to accuse me of my grand climacteric, without conscience or remorse. — How grievously the Court *has* fallen off! — What a deficiency of refinement — what an extinction of all taste! — I foresaw it all, my dear Sir — I foresaw it — I prophesied it to the poor dear King! — Reform was sure to be to London, what the revolution of eighty-nine was to Paris; — Versailles devastated, — the cottage, gone, — the aristocracy humiliated, — the lowest people hopping their way, like the frogs of the Plague of Egypt into the King's chambers! — Dreadful to think of, Cis, dreadful to think of; — everything profaned, — everything vulgarized. Who would sit in such a House, I should like to know? — a House of highways and hedges. — I prophesied it all to the poor dear King! — Thank God *he* did not live to see this day!"

"Had His Majesty survived, the day would probably have exhibited other lights!" — said I, gravely, — well aware that it was the officious prophesying of Jack Harris which had transferred him out of Windsor Castle into an Irish Peerage. "However, it is best to let by-gones be by-gones."

"By-gones, indeed! — But, my dear fellow, how amazingly well you are looking!" — cried his Lordship, suddenly interrupting himself. "When following you just now, Cis, I was almost in doubt whether it could be you — for saving a little stiffness in the pins (there is gout in your family I think?) I swear I should have taken you for a man of five and thirty! — On looking into your face, of course one sees those tell-truth lines, in which Father Time inscribes *his* secrets and lets out one's own; — but on the whole, you wear like water-proof!"

It was unnecessary to inform his Lordship how much his five years' exile had been in my favour; and that as to my *wearing*, — half an hour per diem of *his* conversation would very soon wear and tear me out. — I was amused, however, to perceive his perplexity between wanting to persuade me he was still at the top of the tree, and dreading by his vaunts to lose my aid in raising himself from the bottom.

Harris evidently flattered himself I had forgotten his having been thrown overboard long previous to the wreck

of the gallant vessel ; and expected to find the late King's set not only still compact and coherent, but ready to admit him into its body corporate of Fashion. — Bless the blockhead ! no two of us held together six months after the death of the King ! — It is one of the advantages of worldly associations that, if lightly formed, they are dispersed with the same facility ; — like the vessel prepared by Nero to founder with his mother, the spars are nailed together as if for the purpose of instability. Fellows who are what is called “ deuced good friends ” at a table spread daily for their enjoyment with the best viands and the best wines, the moment the table is wanting, find each other the greatest bores in creation ; and of the set which Harris expected to find in mystic combination, like a Masonic Lodge, some were buried alive, — some dead, — some having married, — some been born again unto righteousness ; — some were gone to the dogs, — some to the tabbies, — some were in the House of Lords, — some in the House of Words. — But you might as well have looked for the last year's snow, as attempted to collect a knot of them in friendly recognition.

It was all as it should be. Courts are like corn-fields : — one crop succeeds another, and when the sickle hath done its work, it is absurd to go prosing on about last year's harvest. — The business of man is to look forward. All prattle of the past is good only as “ alms for oblivion,” to be dropped into the wallet of Time ; — which last sentence looks so plausible and copy-bookish, that no doubt some holepicker of a critic, will think it his duty to certify that it is a crib from Troilus and Cressida.

After all his other affronts, Lord Harris ended by inviting me to dinner ; — as a hint of course, that I ought to invite *him*. But after listening to his exclamations about the delight of drinking a glass of wine again with so old a friend, a manner of phrase I particularly abhor, inasmuch as I take wine with nobody, and do not wish to pass for anybody's old friend. I simply replied, that I had engagements for three or four weeks. — And so we parted.

My readers may treat this interview as a trifle. I wish it may be any of their fortunes when between forty and forty-five they have been foolish enough to beflutter their

spirits and senses with notions of a second boyhood, by gazing day after day, for weeks, into the eyes of a pretty little creature of seventeen, to be suddenly reduced to sobriety by the spectacle of a contemporary, who, having thought proper to vulgarize into a middle-aged man, tries to persuade *you*, that you are as disgusting and antediluvian as himself.

Moreover, as I knew that all the notice likely to be conceded to Lord Harris in fashionable life, would be as a contemporary and colleague of Cecil Danby, with the precept of

Percunctatorem fugito, nam garrulus idem est,

before my eyes, I dreaded his chattering at Arthur's or the Alfred, about his "FRIEND CECIL and the pretty little Irish widow *five-and-twenty years ago!*"

Oh! Jupiter! king of gods and men!—

## Five-and-twenty years ago!

---

### CHAPTER IV.

Je n'ai pas rencontré une femme passionnée qui ne fût ou ne devint très malheureuse. — BODIN.

Her roving eye a wayward lustre shed,  
But lofty thought sat thron'd upon her head;  
Calm as a seraph, sportive as a child,  
She trod the rocky beach, or heathy wild. — LORD MORPETH.

I REMEMBER, in my days of Carltonian householdry, contemplating with compassion the efforts made by one to whom all other efforts were easy, to convert an old beau into a young dandy. At the time, I fancied the cause mere vanity, and the effect, vexation of spirit. It would have been so much more manly, I thought, to wear his age with decency!

Alas! how circumscriptly does one appreciate the motives of one's fellow-creatures! — That which appears



a vain and frivolous pretence, sometimes contains the germ of an exquisite romance, or the epitome of ten volumes of Petrarchian sonnets. I was now beginning to understand the emotions compressed within the heart of the Regent, when trying to restrain his portliness within decent compass; and though *I* wanted courage to conceal *my* iron-grey under a Truefitt, I never agonized my feet in a new pair of varnished pumps, without recalling to mind the gait of His Majesty while trying to do it easy under the same Spanish-Armadian process of torture.

And was it *mere* vanity that now induced me to hobble in his royal steps?—Oh! no, no, no, no, no!—It was the very *essence* of chivalric devotion!—Conscious that although my brows were frosted with the tints of December, my heart was warm and balmy as April, I attempted with earnest labour to assign to my outward man, truer tokens of the inward Cecil, who had not, I swear it by the goddess and godling of Paphos! *half* attained to years of discretion. It was useless to deceive the simple child who fixed her eyes so wistfully upon me, day after day, as if entrusting her destiny to the care of a protector, by allowing her to suppose me the middle-aged man I was beginning to appear. It was better she should know the worst;—it was better she should see in me the *un*-trustworthy fellow I really was.—If she chose to confide in me, on discovering that though four-and-forty in age, I was four-and-twenty in feelings or reality, so much the better for *me*,—so much the worse for *her*. It was at least an act of conscientiousness to assign limits to my evil influence.

It was now the occupation of my mornings to look forward to my afternoon visits to Bruton Street;—not as regarded the heiress,—I am sadly afraid I had almost forgotten that the virtuous Marcia inhabited the house,—but as regarded the tremor I knew to be produced in the frame of that little gentle timid creature, by the well-known knock of my tiger.—It was the music of her sphere.—All the joy, all the poetry of Mary's day were doubtless concentrated in the momentary glance of kindly sympathy I directed towards her, on entering the room.—My coming was the signal of her release from her

labours and banishment to her own room; but the thirty seconds she *was* permitted to spend in my presence, were

As if Favonius, father of the Spring,  
Who in the verdant meads doth reign sole king,  
Had rous'd him up, and shook his feathers, wet  
With Heaven's own dew of joy !

Strange as it may seem, in spite of the seven-and-twenty years intervening between us, — (for Mary must have beheld the light of day about the time when I was watching it through the cachemere curtains of the misunderstood beauty in the Rue du Montblanc,) — we were almost on a par in age. Mary had abided on the shady, — I, on the sunny side of the way of life. Joy is the real elixir of immortality : the charm that imparts firmness to the muscle, elasticity to the flesh. — I, whose soul had been taking its ease, and whose body eating, drinking, and sleeping to its heart's content, all those forty years and four, retained a sort of spurious youth, like autumnal currants preserved under bass ; while Mary, on whom the breath of adversity had early exercised its bitter influence, was saddened into precocious maturity, like the fruit whose sweetness is derived from an insect gnawing at the core. — Of the two, I am persuaded I was three or four years the younger.

People who saw me come out of the house in Bruton Street, my countenance brightened by the lustre of those emotions which impart bloom to the cheeks and expression to the eyes beyond the spell of all the cosmeticians of the day, used to say, — "'Pon my soul! — Cecil is the most extraordinary fellow upon earth, — there is nothing like Cecil! — With a grown-up niece at Almacks, he not only manages to look as well as when he left Oxford, — but contrives to throw as much passion into his courtship of the ugliest heiresses of these or any other times, as if sighing at the feet of the prettiest creature in the world. How does the fellow manage to *s'enthousiasmer à volonté*? — We failed with Miss Crutchley, because she saw that, instead of making love to her, we were offering it to her bought ready made. She refused Sir Moulton Drewe as being too old, — yet he is a year the junior of Cecil ; — she refused Lord George Hartingfield as a fortune-hunter,

— yet *his* income is twice as large as that of Cecil; and she refused Rotherhithe because she saw that he did not care a button about her; — while Cecil Danby, you see, continues to make himself appear as much in love as Garriek in Romeo! — Cecil is positively unique!”

*Unique* or *inique*, it did not much signify! I had firmly made up my mind that, to be Hectored by an Andromache being insupportable, I would withdraw my motion for the hand of the heiress, the first moment she should be looking the other way, so as to afford me courage. — The sequel of the romance had still to be decided on. — I suppose there *was* some vague sequel glimmering in my mind; — for whereas my income, consisting of my pension, and the interest of ten thousand pounds, had been peremptorily made up by my brother to a thousand a year, I kept very foolishly reminding myself (more times a day than it is good to remind oneself of anything but that Life is a brief pageant,) — that, with one thousand per annum and the woman of one's heart, Sicily or Italy, or even France, supplies nooks and corners of Tempe-an beauty and tranquillity, where people never enquire whether one's Mary's name was Smith or Thompson, — where peerages never unfold their hateful leaves, — and where, when for a happy pair

There come those full confidings of the past,  
All sunshine now where all was overcast;  
Their steps may wander till the day is gone,  
Lost in each other; — and, when night draws on  
Covering them round, amid the dying day,  
All that is mortal seems to melt away!

What fools we all are! — Well! I suppose there is no help for it! — Let us talk of something else!

All this time, I was become sinfully blind to what was going on in Connaught Place. — I sometimes enquired of Frank Walsingham how Rotherhithe prospered in his suit; — satisfied that so buckramitish a suitor could not have proceeded further than the fifth volume of his Grandisonian courtship, — But Frank appeared just then so eagerly assiduous in the train of the Irish beauty Lady Mitchelston, the belle of the season, as to be utterly ignorant or utterly indifferent on the subject. — It is not every

wretch of a younger son who would have evinced the same sangfroid concerning the lawful marriage of the head of the family.

Meanwhile, I never went to Connaught Place or caught sight of my niece among the glimpses of fashionable parties, without being struck by the nobleness of her air, and sensibility of her countenance. — That shyness which intercourse with the world usually wears off, seemed in *her* case only to increase. — There was always the same struggle of shame, when the curtain of the sanctuary of her mind was ever so slightly uplifted by the cross-questioning of idle talkers. Intelligence streamed from her eyes; yet whenever she *could*, she refrained from adding more than monosyllables to the conversation of her father.

It was impossible to see a greater contrast than between the poor gentle child in Bruton Street, and the highly-gifted, highly-educated, highly-born, highly-fortuned, only daughter of the proudest and happiest of fathers. — It was as moonlight on the snow, compared with sunshine on some glittering lake. — So deceptive are outward shows, more especially as regarding female nature, that it was by no means improbable the still water ran the deepest; and that there was more real sensibility in the soul of the humble Mary, than of the brilliant Jane; of which no greater proof need be adduced than that Mary had cast herself out of her element to distinguish Cecil Danby, while Jenny submitted to be the idol of a Lord Rotherhithe, because he was what is called a suitable match.

There was one thing to be taken into the account, which few men are at the trouble of including, when striking the balance of their conquests. — The existence of Mary was devoid of all light and colour; and as the deep and tranquil well reflects on its quiet breast, at noon-day, the unseen star above of which the stream rippling in the sunshine fails to catch the light, *she* bore upon her gentle bosom the image which on a more worldly charmer had produced less impression.

I confess that in my sparkling days of Helenas and Emilys, I sometimes wondered how any girl could be egotist enough to imagine her influence sufficiently potent to outbalance the millions of fascinations awaiting the fa-

vourites of society. — As I entered the crowded opera, for instance, singled out by a hundred eyes, amid the voluptuous swell of music, the blaze of light, the effusion of perfumes, the glitter of jewels, the confluence of gentle smiles, the pressure of partial hands, — how *was* I to be constant? — I did my best. — But it strikes me that it was much easier to love Cecil Danby from Southampton Buildings, than for Cecil Danby to be faithful to “any mortal mixture of earth’s mould,” as the centre of such an agglomeration of bright and happy influences.

Talking of bright and happy influences, I often dined, *en famille*, with the Mereworths. I was generous enough to forgive them the stupid mistake into which I had deluded myself; and resume, as a friend, the place which had never been conceded to me in any other capacity. — I went the oftener, that I saw them sadly dispirited by the manner in which Jane’s refusal of poor Chippenham was operating upon his character. — The boy was desperate — reckless, — rushing into dissipations of every kind; and poor Lady Mereworth, who seemed to entertain an idea that Cecil was a centre around which all the rôles of St. James’s Street revolved, tacitly appealed to my protection in favour of her son, as the Pagans used to burn propitiatory sacrifices on the altars of the infernal gods. — She put him under my wing, as it were, at Crockford’s; and implored me (tacitly) not to allow the angels or vampires of Laporte’s eighth Heaven to fan him to death with theirs. — Neither she nor her husband seemed to understand that the boy was broken-hearted; that the only way to restore him to the decencies of life, was to heal with tenderest care the wounds of his afflicted soul. I was truly sorry for Mereworth and his wife. To have reared such a son, and for such a result, was indeed afflictive. Nay, I was more angry with Jane for her rejection of poor Chippenham, than even for her civilities to Rotherhithe.

One night, as I was driving leisurely home from Connaught Place down Park Lane, I saw Chippenham with a cigar in his mouth, standing between George Hartingfield, and Mitchelston the husband of the Irish beauty, lounging near Dorchester House, till it was time to go to Crockford’s; and persuaded Chip to let me drive him to

St. James's Street, by way of gaining some little insight into his habits and proceedings.

"How *can* you stand the company of such a fellow as Hartingfield, my dear Chip?" said I. — "A fellow who can do nothing but laugh, and has nothing to show for his laugh, but a remarkably bad set of teeth."

"I like to hear people merry!" said the boy, peevishly. "It is relief to live with a fellow who takes the trouble of laughing at his own jokes out of one's hands."

"You are not of a time of life to be spared the trouble of laughing, my dear fellow!" said I. — "Gravity, at your age, is as much out of place as a full-bottomed wig on the little boys in Kneller's family pictures. No man is ever popular, who will not lend his hand to the plaudits of the great audience of the world."

I could feel, as he leant beside me in the cab, an impetuous shrug of the shoulders.

"Let the people in the dress boxes clap the piece!" cried he. "I shall take my place in the pit. — I don't want to be popular. — I hate popular men!"

"It is true that to be liked by everybody is the way to be loved by no one," said I, carelessly, — really carelessly, — I had no ulterior meaning.

"How can you say *that*?" cried Chippenham, — and I was ass enough to imagine that he applied the injurious dictum to myself; as if a boy of one and twenty were likely to concern himself *who* cared or did not care for a contemporary of his father! — "Look at Walsingham!"

"Which of the Walsinghams?" said I, — for *my* Walsingham was as commonly called Frank, — as I, Cecil.

"*Which*? — There is but one, I fancy, whom people trouble their heads about."

"Frank is, I admit, a universal favourite," said I, — "but if you mean that Lady Mitchelston is attached to him, I am pretty sure she encourages him only as she encourages twenty other dangles."

"If she encouraged all London and half Dublin, it would be no manner of consequence to me!" said Chippenham peevishly. "As to her flirting with Frank Walsingham, it only increases my disgust towards him, that any man

favoured as *he* is, should condescend to enlist in the train of a married woman."

I was glad to hear my young friend so morally disposed; — for, sooth to say, the edition of Holy Writ, for the accidental omission wherein of the word "*not*" in the Commandment most important to the neighbourhood of Grosvenor Square, Archbishop Laud inflicted a heavy fine on the King's printer, appeared to have found its way that season into the bosom of a vast number of families! — Nevertheless, I could not forbear inquiring in *what* my friend Frank was so much more favoured than the rest of his sex.

"Had you been in the crush room last night, there would have been no need to ask the question," said he.

And he spoke so mysteriously, that I almost regretted Lady Crutchley's majestic habit of sailing out of the Opera ten minutes before the conclusion of the ballet, lest peradventure her feathers (including the bird of Paradise) should be ruffled by contact with those of inferior birds.

"As I was *not*, — perhaps you will explain to me Frank's *bonne fortune*?" said I.

"It was scarcely what you comprehend in the word *bonne fortune*," resumed Chippenham; "though a fortune which I would resign all I am ever likely to possess in the world to accomplish!"

Somewhat anxious to ascertain who was to be the successor of my pretty niece in his affections, I persisted in my inquiries; till, by earnest cross-examination, I discovered that this violent fit of jealousy was simply occasioned by Jane having taken the arm of Frank Walsingham to follow Herries and his wife to the carriage!

"You were not aware, I see, that Rotherhithe went down with his father yesterday to the Installation," said I. "No doubt he commissioned Frank to be his proxy in his absence."

"*He* commission?" ejaculated Chippenham. "What upon earth signifies what Lord Rotherhithe says, does or thinks, — either in that, or any other quarter? — You cannot really mean, that you ever for a moment supposed him an object of interest to Miss Danby, otherwise than the brother of the man on whom she has so rashly bestowed her affections?"

"What do *you* really mean, my dear Chippenham?" cried I, startled almost out of breath, in my turn. "Jane attached to Frank Walsingham? Frank Walsingham paying attention to Jane? You are out of your senses!"

"*I am!*" replied he, with much emotion, — "but it is the result, not the cause, of my making the discovery! — I swear to you, Danby, that had she attached herself to a man worthy of her or whom I believe capable of securing her happiness, I should have resigned myself to my disappointment. But to see her throw herself away, — to see her profane her young affections, by devoting them to one so utterly incapable of appreciating the value of such a treasure, — one who — but why talk upon it!" — cried he, in broken gasps, almost amounting to sobs, — "unless you wish to see me go mad in right earnest!"

"Frank Walsingham!" — was all I could ejaculate; — nor did I refrain from the ejaculation, — for much as I commiserated the state of poor Chippenham, the idea of what my brother would suffer from such a discovery was infinitely more distressing. I remembered, however, the unreasonableness of all jealous minds. Even I, so *sure* of my influence under similar circumstances, had on more than one occasion, taken the most preposterous suspicions into my head!

"You *must be* mistaken, my dear Chippenham!" said I; "Frank is paying attention to Lady Mitchelston!"

"A blind, — a mere blind!"

"But to deceive *whom*?"

"Everybody, — *you*, — who have been the first to be deceived!"

"But why deceive me? — even if he were in love with my niece, what signifies? — So is his brother, — so is old Sir Gerald Moseley, — so is Lord de Greyvin, — so are twenty others, to whom she gives not a moment's thought."

"While to Walsingham, she gives every thought of her soul!"

"How little, my dear Chippenham, how *very* little do you understand Jane!" said I. "That girl is enlightenment and intelligence personified, — and Frank a fellow who never opens a book!"



"The more reason that she should like him! She knows enough for both. — She is tired of knowing. — She has lived all her life with intelligent enlightened people. — A man who *feels*, instead of *thinking*, is to her a novelty. — In point of companionship, who would ever equal her own father,? — You once complimented me on my attainments. To *her* they must ever appear second rate; whereas the cheerful pleasant humour of Walsingham, which never comes into competition with the tone of Mr. Danby's conversation, delights as much as it surprises. I swear to you, that I would sacrifice all I know, and all I *have*, in exchange for that unique charm of Walsingham's manner, of which I can understand the attraction, though I cannot understand the secret."

I could not utter a word in reply. — Instead of getting out at Crockford's with Chippenham, as I had promised, I pretended to remember an engagement, and hurried away. I drove off towards Belgrave Square. It was a beautiful summer's night; and I felt that I could not go home, — that I should be unable to breathe elsewhere than in the open air.

*My brother!* — what a disappointment — what a blow was in store for him! — The dissolute habits of Frank, — his want of enlightenment — his want of fortune, — his want of position, — his want of consistency to attain one, — rendered him as unworthy a son-in-law for Danby, as perhaps could have been chosen by the caprices of fortune. And *I* was the cause of this! — I who had deprived him of his son, was about to deprive him of his daughter. — Lord Ormington was right! — Danby would repent having made me his inmate, the longest day he had to live!

But might not Chippenham be mistaken. — Might not my advice be still efficacious with Jane? — No one could yet have represented to her the madness of her preference; for those entitled to lecture her on the subject, entertained no suspicion of her folly. — I resolved to take an early opportunity of deciding for myself whether Chippenham's suspicions were well-founded. — The countenance of my niece was so sure an indication of her feelings, that now my attention was directed to the subject, I could not long remain in doubt. But for my pre-

engrossment in Bruton Street, I should probably have been beforehand with Chippenham in his discoveries.

Had I been her father instead of her uncle Cecil, I should probably, according to the rule of contraries I have laid down as peculiar to the parental estate, have rushed into her presence, roughly interrogated her concerning her predilections, and bade her speak no more to Frank Walsingham, on pain of disinherittance, — the usual threat held out on such occasions, by fathers to children, because the penalty of which children are least capable of comprehending the importance.

But Frank Walsingham! — If Chippenham's surmise were just, what had Frank Walsingham been about? — How had he been dealing with his friend Cecil? — Though a dozen years younger than myself, I had ever admitted him to such terms of familiarity as entitled him to acquaint me with all his follies, — and Heaven knows he was not sparing in his use of the privilege! — I knew of his debts, his embarrassments, his entanglements. — He had made no secret to me of Lady Mitchelston's fancy for *him* — why conceal his own affection for Jane, unless for the nefarious purpose of so engaging her love in return, that one of the best matches in London might eventually fall to his share?

But no! — I would not and could not believe this of Frank Walsingham! — There was nothing designing in his nature. — His heart was as guileless as Jane Danby's countenance. If he had erred, it was at the instigation of irresistible passion; — if he had deceived me, it was because he still hoped to subdue a feeling he understood the unlawfulness of encouraging. — However, I would see and judge for myself.

I was driving, as I said before, in the Belgrave Square quarter, — simply for the sake of air, and a free causeway; — when, as I passed through Eaton Square, I perceived Sir Lucius Brettingham's house lighted up, and recalled to mind that, though regularly invited to her ladyship's Sunday evening parties, I had not set foot in her house throughout the season. — I was just in the irritable mood to go anywhere, or do anything, to get rid of myself; — as a man, beginning to get tipsy, is ready to drink anything and everything presented to him. — I

went in, therefore, to Lady Brettingham's; — I did not much care *where* I went.

Mariana received me with all her former graciousness. It was part of her system to make no enemies in life; and the regiment of partizans recruited by all that usually creates a legion of indignant faces, was really surprising. Her life was a system of policy. — Instigated by heartless ambition, she had resolved to render everything, even the holiest of feelings and engagements, subsidiary to her rise in life; — and as in the political turmoil of France, even the altar-plate of the churches was melted down to assist in the advancement of the cause, nothing so sacred that Lady Brettingham did not trample under foot, as steps whereby to ascend the throne of preferment!

Like every other course unflinchingly persisted in, it succeeded. — I remember the time when the Windsor set used to say to me, "Cecil — how *can* you lose your time with that vulgar woman; — pretty certainly — but after all — a Mrs. Brettingham?" — accompanied by shrugs and sneers, which, from certain persons, amount to a *peine infamante*.

Yet now, when I entered her rooms after six months' absence, so as to have acquired the freshness of eye indispensable to judge of such a point, *whom* did I find there — *whom*? — The very men, grown greyer and greater, — who, eight years before, had reprehended me for losing my time with "a" Mrs. Brettingham!

She had managed to assemble round her everything in London best worth assembling; everything belonging to the old Court whose privileges of birth and fortune stood above the chance of a reverse of fashion such as that of Harris; — everything belonging to the new, secured by a trifling alloy from the rigidity distinguishing its less popular adherents. All the ministers surrounded her, — and what was more to the purpose, the ministers' wives; for they knew that a card they had found so useful, might again acquire value from the chances of the game. The *beaux esprits* and *têtes fortes* of society came for the sake of sparkling in a ministerial circle; and the high *élite* of mere fashion, simply because it was understood that there was some question of selection among even the thrice-winnowed chaff.

All this was easy to be understood; for people of good fortune, good manners, and good appearance, may do wonders, (by the exercise of extremely bad principles,) towards the formation of what is called a good set. — The wonder was that Mariana — I beg her and Sir Lucius's pardon, she had long been Lady Brettingham to *me*, — should have achieved it without becoming an object of odium and insult to the ejected, or being poignarded by the bosom friends of whom she had ceased to remember the existence.

Such is the charm of urbanity in this wicked world! — The Frenchman, who in a crowd elbows the breath out of your body, by first exclaiming "*Pardon!*" and conciliating you by a smile, deprives you of your title to knock him down; — "*car on peut tout faire*," says the old song, "*quand on le fait poliment*." Objects whereof the surface is carefully oiled, pass through the waters of strife, without contracting moisture; and Lady Brettingham shook the defiling waters from her wings — I was going to say like a swan — but I have a partiality for swans, and will not degrade them by the comparison, — shook the defiling waters from her wings, like a Muscovy duck.

As I half anticipated, Frank Walsingham was idling away his evening in Eaton Square; and already I felt the impossibility of accosting him with my usual friendship. If occupying his customary place beside Lady Mitchelston, I should feel it treachery to Jane; — if solitary and out of spirits, as becomes a lover absent from his love, I should feel it treachery to *me*. — I sat aloof, therefore, devoting to Lady Brettingham the formal attention and deference which constitutes every well-bred man's style of sending to Coventry the woman he has worn long enough on his sleeve; when up came Frank, with his usual sunshiny face, and abrupt but cordial manner.

"Cecil?" cried he — "Cecil at a *soirée*, and on a Sunday evening! — My dear fellow, accept my congratulations! — I was afraid you were half married by this time! — Having missed you from your usual haunts, we fancied you crushed under the weight of parchments and wedding favours! — I have not seen you for centuries."

"I saw *you* at the opera last night," said I, coolly.

"And I saw *you*, — as one sees a lion at the Zoo. —

caged in his den. — But you don't suppose I consider your sitting in Lady Crutchley's box, being at the opera?"

"As much, I suppose, as *your* sitting in my sister's," said I, in the same tone.

"*I* in Mrs. Herries's box?" retorted Frank. — "My dear Cecil, only prove your words! — It would have been indeed worth while to exchange the Omnibus for such an alternative. — Why, I no more dare show so much as the shadow of my glasses there, than in the Queen's!"

Lady Brettingham, little interested in our family discussion, now rising and walking away to play the agreeable to the French ambassador, Frank took her place beside me on the sofa.

"Nay, I only thought so," said I, "because you took Jane to her carriage, as *I* ought to have done; — and——"

I snatched a glance at Frank, as I spoke, but saw no shame in his countenance. The villain only looked handsomer, brighter, and happier than usual. — "Upon his brow, shame was ashamed to sit."

"Thank Heaven, then, you were otherwise employed," said he, candidly; "for unless when such chances stand my friends, I have no possibility now of approaching her. — Thanks to Ro., you know, I have long been banished the house; and as I do not dance, and have consequently no pretext for addressing her above a passing minute in a ball-room, I have not even those opportunities for contemplating her sweet face, which even such a scoff of the earth as a detrimental like myself might enjoy, if he bore any other name than mine!"

There was no holding out against his frankness, — still less against his winning smiles. — He was Frank Walsingham again, and already I had almost forgotten poor Chippenham and his afflictions. I could not, however, forget my brother; and if not angrily, determined gravely to interrogate the delinquent.

"But my dear Frank," said I, — as unclesily as my white cravat and miraculously fitting pantaloons admitted, — "what on earth can be the use of your indulging in admiration of Jane Danby, or of any other girl? — You are not a marrying man, — you are not in a position of life to ——"

"Ay! — tell me I am not in a position of life to enjoy

the use of my eyes, ears, and understanding !” interrupted he, bitterly. — “ Quite right, Cecil ! — Quite right ! — I am a younger son, — eh ? — Say it out, like the rest of them ! — a chartered beggar, a wretch, by the condemnation of providence, — a child of wrath, — a victim by predestination.”

I looked quietly round to ascertain, without allowing my suspicion to be manifest, whether he were mad or drunk ; but saw nothing in his face, saving the frantic expression that my own used to wear when progressing every morning to Downing Street, during the period between my visit to the D’Acunhas’ empty house in Burton Crescent and the mouth of the Tagus. — He was desperate only because desperately in love.

“ I know all you can urge,” resumed he, perceiving my utter amazement. “ I know that I have no more right to indulge in the pleasure of Jane’s society, than to forin pretensions to a crown ! — But I cannot help it — Cecil, I swear to you I cannot help it ! — If I had the slightest reason to hope or fear that my attentions were noticed by her, and that they might consequently prove prejudicial to her happiness, I would refrain ; — hard as it might be, — I would never speak to her again ! — But to have known such a creature as that, — to have seen her intimately as, when you lived in Connaught Place, I used to see her, — so superior in intelligence and accomplishments to every human being, yet simple and gentle as a child, — gay, fearless, loving, confiding — But God forgive me for talking about her !” cried he, interrupting himself, — “ I never so much as think of her a moment, when I am alone, without feeling it to be profanation, and swearing it shall be for the last time !”

“ I rejoice to see you so reasonable on the subject, my dear Frank,” said I ; — “ for if you seriously come to consider the question ” —

But why inflict upon the Public the prosification I inflicted upon poor Walsingham ? — The Public has no evil designs against my pretty niece, and deserves no such chastisement as a lecture at my hands ! — For the last ten pages, it has probably been exclaiming with Hesiod,

— Τὴν δ’ ἀκαμάτος πρὶν αὐδῆ  
ἐκ στόματος ἔειπε —

and I will consequently put an end to a long chapter, requesting it to take breath for one shorter and, I trust, more sweet.

---

## CHAPTER V.

Her beauty was not made for all observance,  
If beauty 't might be called. It was a sick  
And melancholy loveliness, that pleased  
But few; and somewhat of its charm perhaps  
Grew from the spot she dwelt in. — PROCTOR.

Velut minuta magno  
Deprensa navis in mari, vesaniente vento. — CATULL.

HONOUR and glory are as capricious in their influences as the infection of the cholera, which used to sweep off the patients on one side the ward of an hospital, and allow the other side to arise and walk. — The lion of St. James's Street is an ass in Gray's Inn Lane; and the John Duke of Marlborough, a demigod in Blenheim Park, becomes in France the "Marlbrook," *qui*

s'en vat-en guerre,  
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine,

as a cadence for the dandling of teething infants!

I, Cecil Danby, who to Frank was an angry uncle, protecting my pretty niece from the attacks of a younger brother, a middle-aged man not to be hoodwinked by a pair of silly lovers, — became in Bruton Street not only a designing younger brother myself, but by a most Janus-like extent of iniquity, as silly a lover as any Master Slender either on or off the stage!

The French have a proverb of "*jeter son bonnet par dessus les moulins*," to exemplify any desperate piece of folly; and pleasant enough it is, in some cases, to fling one's hat over the mill. — But believe me, gentle Public, it is much pleasanter to throw one's wig! — When once a man of mature age makes up his mind to play the fool, or rather when his mind makes itself up to make a fool

of *him*, the excitement of dashing down the Montagnes Russes, as I once did with my *femme incomprise* at Tivoli, or of shooting the rapids, or winning a whole night long at hazard, is nothing to it!

I might seem very grey and very grave to Frank Walsingham, when prosing to him on Lady Brettingham's yellow satin divan; but I will be hanged if I looked either grave or gray to Mary, when, by going an hour earlier than usual to Bruton Street, the following day, I not only found her alone, arranging fresh pens and paper on the writing table, but contrived to make a beautiful moss rose which had made its entrance into the room in my button hole, make its exit in her bosom.

It was a rash act; — for the possession of a rose was as hard a matter for Mary to account for to her tyrants, as that of the Pitt diamond. Roses do not rain down from heaven, and who was there to give one to a poor neglected thing like her? Who had ever in her life bestowed so much as a flower upon that humbled child? — It could only be by an act of culpability that even so slight a token of human kindness had fallen to her share.

Mary hurried out of the room after receiving it, — perhaps because alarmed lest I should offer more; and already so confused by the few words and momentary pressure of the hand accompanying the gift, that she was not aware of running against Miss Crutchley on the threshold. — Not a syllable passed between them, — as far as *I* could perceive, not even a glance. — But it is amazing what comprehensive powers exist in the *augenblick* of a jealous woman!

I would recommend any gentleman, whether black or grey, imprudent enough to bring clandestine roses to young ladies, not to let them be *moss* roses. — It could only be the fibrous stain left by the tell-tale flower on the lappel of my coat, that pointed out the origin of the treasure revealed by that rapid glare of the Bengal tigress, as in Mary's possession.

Unaware, however, that her suspicions were astir, I could not imagine the cause of the suppressed ire I distinguished in her latent growl, and saw trembling in her claws. — The strict habits of the family induced me, indeed, to ascribe her indignation to the tittle-tattle of the



Morning Post, lying on the table, which of course chronicled a name of so much importance as that of Cecil Danby, among the "HONOURABLES" present at Lady Brettingham's Sunday conversazione of the night before. I concluded she was shocked; and, hypocrite as I was, affected to explain the accidental nature of my visit.

Still, the virtuous Marcia kept looking fiercer and fiercer, — and growing taller and taller, — like the weird woman in Scott's charming ballad of Lord Ronald, till I began to entertain fears for the ceiling. — Every word I uttered, she managed to contradict; — every opinion I advanced, she fractionously opposed. — It is amazing how invariably a woman intent upon recalling the wandering affections of a rover, contrives to make herself fifty times more disagreeable than usual. — So odious indeed and so bitter were both mother and daughter that day, that I felt the impossibility of supporting the bondage of such a marriage chain, even if a chain of diamonds of the first water; and should perhaps have been harassed and irritated into an explicit avowal to that effect on the spot, but that I was afraid they might visit upon little Mary the insult offered to themselves. — Good Lord! how one *does* hate an ugly woman to whom one has been guilty of the baseness of making interested love, when once the effort is over and repented!

That night, the Crutchleys had a card party; — a thing out of date except in the dreadfully dowagerly set which constituted their real element, when they did not purchase the presence of the Lady Grindleshams and Duchesses of Walmer, by that of Grisi, Rubini, Tamburini, Lablache, and Gunter. — I was already engaged to dine there, what is called *en famille*, — heaven pity me! — and on coming up from dinner, (stupidly early, but how could I remain in the dining-room tête-a-tête with the portrait of the late Sir Marmaduke, in full regimentals, with the insurance plate of Seringapatam dangling therefrom?) I found Mary in her simple morning gown, receiving orders about the refreshment table from the heiress; who was arrayed in Tyrian purple, to which the yellowness of her skin appeared to add a golden fringe.

Mary's eyes were, as usual, cast upon the carpet; and

her lips simply moved in the affirmative when asked whether she understood the instructions she was to issue to Gunter's people. — I made it a general rule to look the other way, whenever Mary was being brow-beaten. — But on the present occasion, nature got the better of my villainess; and when I saw that the poor girl's eyes rivalled in colour the rose I had so imprudently offered her, made my way straight into the back drawing-room, through which I knew she must pass, and on seeing her white muslin gown glide silently through the glare of that gorgeous chamber, advanced towards her, and reckless whether my movements were perceptible or not to her persecutors, whispered as she passed, — "Mary, dearest! be of good cheer. — You have friends who will not allow you to remain thus wretched. — Be comforted!"

As she disappeared through the door on one side, like some fair setting star, Marcia rose on the other threatening and lurid as the planets Mars. I saw her standing between the open folding-doors surveying us, and upon the point of exploding into a burst of fury; when, fortunately for all parties, the servants announced the Earl and Countess of something or other, and she was forced to turn round, curtsy and be civil. Other visitors followed in quick succession, and it was diverting beyond measure to see her every now and then darting annihilating glances towards me, — then, turning with more than her usual amenity towards some dowager of sufficient stupidity and stateliness to require being twaddled to. — Poor soul! — I *really* pitied her! Think what it was to an ugly woman of four and thirty to be startled from her happy dream of being loved by CECIL!

The species of hard, dry, guinea-point whist played by elderly Countesses and K.C.B.'s, was soon proceeding at half-a-dozen tables. — "I *do* believe," said Vanburgh's Sir John Brute, "that if I were married to a hogshhead of claret, matrimony would make me hate it!" — I do believe that half-a-dozen such card parties, would make me loathe even whist; — that glorious and immortal game, of which a rubber with a satisfactory partner, and well-shaded lights, might reconcile one to existence in a cell of the Inquisition, on the eve of torture. — But a cell of the Inquisition were a trifle compared with the drawing-room in

Bruton Street, which, that night, was literally too hot to hold me. — After swallowing half-a-dozen glasses of the iced cherry-water I knew to have been ordered by Mary, I slipped away; — and went home to sweeten my imagination by

Sunny gleams of half-extinguish'd thought,  
And trembling recognitions dim and faint;  
The offspring of a sad perplexity.

For she had looked mildly and thankfully towards me, in reply to my passionate address! — Her eyes, those tranquil well-springs of hallowed feeling, had for once been uplifted towards me. — I saw I was beloved. — Dear gentle child! — What an *avenir* for my old age to be worshipped by so fair a creature. Ten thousand a year? — Bah! — what were thrice as much, — if shared with a Hecate whose countenance would put *me* out of countenance for the remainder of my days! — One thousand with Mary were fairly worth ten thousand with Marcia! — I determined to make all this explicitly known to them on the morrow,

“In my rash youth, when George the Third was king,” I took the liberty of introducing my Public to my chamber in Hanover Square; — and making it familiar as its glove, with the relative position of my nail-nippers and boot-jack. — I hesitate about requesting the honour of its company to my coucher or lever in St. James’s Place! — The bright, glazed, summery freshness of the old convolvulus-room, was, I fear, more strictly in accordance with its notions of the fitness of things for a *héros de roman*, than the snug apartment of which the well-listed doors and windows, the patent locks and hinges, the commodious wardrobes and sober-four-post bed, now whispered that for Cecil the poetry of life was yielding precedence to its prose. I forget even the colour of the curtains of my present bed; — I only know that the mattress was elastic, and the pillows of down. — After all, what signifies the colour of one’s curtains, providing the bed be comfortable?

I allude to the extreme comfortableness of the said bed, dear Public, as some excuse for the sound sleep in which I was plunged at eleven o’clock the following morning,

when a letter was brought in with my hot water, and laid on my dressing table. In the days of the convolvulus hangings, O'Brien would have known better than to lay a note in a female handwriting on my dressing table; and instinct would have woke me to find its dear deluding pages on my pillow!

On the present occasion, there was no great fault to find with him!—How was any right-thinking valet to conjecture that those harsh authoritative-looking lines were traced by a woman's hand;—*he*, accustomed for twenty years to see his master addressed in all sorts and varieties of tender fluent running hands, which look as though Titania herself had presided over the curly tails of their y's, and the aerial slightness of their hair strokes! Why the very name of CECIL was, (like Scotland under the tyranny of Macbeth,) "almost ashamed to know itself," when prefaced by a capital C, nearly the shape of a coal-heaver's hat!

My readers, though they have not yet opened the letter, have of course already premised the name subscribed at the bottom of the last page.—And there were four of them!—four pages of reproaches in that crabbed, scrubby, repellent handwriting, worthy only to perpetuate a family prescription or laundress's bill.—And that it should be privileged to indite tendernesses to *me*!—

Well,—it was my own doing!—If Cecil had never abased himself to write to *her*, the heiress would as soon have ventured to address Her Majesty, as the King of the Coxcombs.

I could very easily favour the public with the letter, for I have it still.—I keep it as people keep a packet of vitiver, or Russia leather, or any other harshly flavoured thing, to drive away the moths from their furred coats,—But it would be a very great bore to transcribe and nearly as great a one to peruse, four pages of the vituperations of an angry, jealous, purse-proud woman.—Her letter was of the same complexion as her face:—I shuddered as I read!

One comfort, however, was contained in those rugged lines.—It was a declaration of war,—and would save me the trouble of opening the first fire.—Miss Crutchley condescended to call me ugly names,—and I accepted them.

— Like Lovelace, when Clarissa addresses him as — “ Villain ! ” — I replied, “ Am I a villain, Madame, — *am* I a villain ? ” — and made good her words.

It would, in fact, have been extremely awkward for a man of even my self-possession, to pay a morning visit for the express purpose of saying in the most plausible of English — “ I have been paying my addresses to you for the last two months, as the richest woman of my acquaintance, — and with the best intentions of making myself comfortable for life at your expense. But the bitter pill has stuck in my throat. *Agréez l’assurance des mes hommages les plus respectueux.* ”

As to writing it, even Miss Crutchley’s cross-grained penmanship could scarcely have made up its mind to convey such an affront to a woman. — It was difficult even to answer the note so as to accept her defiance without committing myself; and I determined to let expressive silence say all I felt ashamed to say for myself, *of* myself.

In the course of my toilet, however, which was a somewhat more agitated one than became my years and experience, I recalled to mind that any offence I might commit against the heiress would be visited not on my own head, but on that of Mary. If, while I still frequented the house, they had presumed so to molest the poor girl, that she had not dared uplift her voice or eyes, what might they not do after losing all hopes of me ? — How, too, was I to convey to that suffering child the intimation of my sympathy ? — I vow to the memory of Richardson and Fielding, I did not so much as know her name ! Finery in the first instance, and consciousness in the last, had always prevented my asking it of the Crutehleys ; and “ *TO MARY,* ” may look very interesting at the head of one of Burns’s or Byron’s poems, but would appear passing strange, and surpassing ridiculous, to the letter sorters of the two-penny post. — As to bribing servants, — I have heard fellows talk about bribing servants ; — but how or where is it to be done ? — Can one drive to a door in Bruton Street in one’s cab, or even walk up to it in one’s boots, — knock at the door, — and offer a five pound note to the butler, or sovereign to the footman ? — I should expect to be given in charge to the police ! — As to accosting Lady Crutchley’s butler (as square-toed and respectable a looking gentleman as an

East India director) with any but the most moral views, I would as soon have presumed to dedicate these my memoirs to a Bishop!

What was to be done? — My Mary — my poor gentle Mary! — *Her* position was utterly different from that of any other girl who had ever unfortunately fallen under my influence. — Emily Barnet was rich; — Helena Winstanley surrounded by the excess of care and comfort peculiar to the country-baronet class of the community; — Sophronia Vavasour of so high a cast a mind, as to be a sort of Edystone light-house, firm against the contending waves of destiny. — But Mary, — gentle, timid, friendless, poor, — Mary, —

Gentle, as if a lily there  
Should shed its white leaves to the air;  
Pining for the summer sun, —  
*She* might die ere night were done! —

I was just making up my mind to go boldly to the house and explain myself to Lady Crutchley, — for, after all, delicacy with Lady Crutchley would have been as much out of place as with the Secretary of the Mendicity Society, — when Lord Chippenham made his appearance. After sending to inquire whether, as I was still at my toilet, he might come up to my dressing room, instead of waiting for an answer, in he walked. — Cool enough, by the way! — I do *not* dye my hair. — I have no secrets of any very particular consequence; — but there *might* have been things lying about (such as, when a boy, I used to notice on the dressing-table of Sir Lionel Dashwood), which I should not have cared to exhibit to a lad like him.

Poor Chipp! — However startled by the liberty he was taking, I could not forbear noticing with regret the change effected by the last year in his handsome person! — His eyes were now lustreless and surrounded by a livid circle, — his lips parched, — his hair neglected. All the brightness of youth was gone; and in its stead, the haggardness and desperation that succeeds the orgie and the hazard table; like the rugged desolation covering after the eruption of the mountain above, the sunny slopes and smiling vineyards of Portici. — Despair had passed that way; and blossom and herbage were dried up and withered!

I was not long in ascertaining the motive of his visit. — Chipp was in a scrape. — Chipp had quarrelled at Crockford's the night before, or rather that morning at four o'clock, with Frank Walsingham; — and Frank had already sent Lord Mitchelston to him for an explanation.

"What on earth am I to do, my dear Danby?" cried Chippenham, throwing himself into a chair. — "I know myself to have been the aggressor; — yet I swear to you that I would sooner cut off my right arm than write a word of apology to the fellow."

"But you need not write; if you know you are in the wrong, say so."

"Never! — Nothing shall induce me to say or write a syllable of excuse or explanation to Frank Walsingham! I sought the quarrel. — I would kill him if I could. — A duel may spare me the crime of murder or suicide."

"Don't talk such cursed nonsense, Chipp!" said I. — "I never thought you a schoolboy till this minute!"

"That is what Hartingfield told me just now, when I went to ask *him* to be my friend in the business. He would have nothing to say to me!"

"Then why do you come to *me*?" said I, somewhat nettled at finding myself second in his list of seconds.

"Because, as Miss Danby's uncle, you are bound to be indulgent towards a madness arising out of my love for her."

"Madness, indeed! — But don't expect *me* to be your abettor. — So far from encouraging you to fight, I think if you sought a frivolous pretext to quarrel with Frank, you cannot be too earnest or too immediate in your apologies. — As to allowing the duel to proceed, I promise you that if you do not behave reasonably, your intentions shall be frustrated."

Chippenham muttered something about "cold-blooded" and "certain age," to which I was good natured enough to turn a deaf ear.

"My dear Chippenham," said I, more gravely, "listen for once to a man who has your father's age, though not his authority. If there be a character more despised than another in modern times, it is a bully and a duellist. — The chances of life, in political or military life especially, *may* bring a man into contact with fellows too ill-conditioned

to be amenable to any other code. But among well-bred people, Chipp, no *such* insults ought to pass as require *such* atonement. Between yourself and Walsingham, for instance, — you, the most gentlemanly lad, and Frank the warmest-hearted fellow in town, how *can* such words or looks or gestures have occurred as to demand this ignominious mode of satisfaction?"

I had better have held my tongue. — The epithet lad applied to himself while to Frank I conceded the title of a warm-hearted fellow, put the bad blood anew into circulation.

"It is useless arguing on such questions," said he, snatching up his hat. "I thought there was more of Cecil Danby left in you! — It was not as my father's old friend, I appealed to your services."

"Stay a minute, my dear Chippenham, stay a minute!" — said I, clutching at his sleeve, as I saw him rush out of the room. — But he was already gone! — He would not be recalled. All I could do was, standing in my dressing gown at the top of the stairs, to cry out, in French, lest the *valetaille* should hear and report, — "At least, consult some reasonable being. Go to De Greyvin — go to Colonel Hartland."

I know not whether he heard me, for he was out of the house in a moment! —

Hæ nugæ seria ducent  
In mala, derisum.

## CHAPTER VI.

O passi sparsi, — o pensier vaghi e pronti, —  
O tenace memoria, o fero ardore,  
O possente desire, o debil core! — PETRARCA.

Spes incerta futuri. — VIRG.

My affairs now exhibited what physicians, when they cannot cure a patient, call a complicated case. — My first object, however, on emerging from the breakfast table, to



my honour as a friend be it spoken, was to hurry after Frank Walsingham. It struck me that, in the way of prevention, my influence might accomplish most with *him*.

But Frank was not to be found. — The irregular habits of his life rendered him often difficult to be met with. — His own man swore he had left town the preceding day. — I suppose he was not a hero (of veracity) to his valet de chambre.

From Frank's I proceeded to the house of Lord Mitchelston, who had brought the message to Chippenham. But Mitchelston, too, was out; — "the time of my lord's coming home, very uncertain."

All this was the deuce of a bore; and sorely did I re-vile myself for not having laid hands upon the boy, when I had him in my power, instead of allowing him to escape so easily. — As he had himself muttered, there was beginning to be something of the "man of a certain age" in my proceedings.

I hastened to White's; — none of the party were there, — none of them had been. I went to Crockford's, — the Traveller's; — and right amazed were the waiters by the phenomenon of the star CECIL visible above the horizon, so many hours before its usual time of rising. — But all without effect. — Not one of them was to be seen or heard of. — I never felt more uncomfortable in my life. — The face of Lady Mereworth, as I beheld it at the coronation, as I beheld it at the Chippenham festivities, irradiated by adoration of her first-born son, rose up in judgment before me; — and though no longer in love with it, I was penetrated with too much regard and respect for the best of wives and mothers, not to enter fully into her feelings in case of any further misfortune befalling that promising boy. She had placed him as it were under my protection. She had implored me to watch over his indiscretions. — Alas! she had not surmised the necessity of watching over his safety!

For after all, it was my own selfishness which had allowed the lad to grow pettish and quit my house with such precipitation. But that my attention was pre-absorbed by the unquiet state of my affections, I should have seen at once the importance of detaining him.

And now, I might as well stand at Hungerford Stairs, watching for the return of a straw which the morning's tide had wafted towards Richmond, as expect to find Chippenham again, amid the hurry of a crowded London day in June.

Never before had I been so nervously conscious of the turmoil gradually awakening at the West-end, between the stillness of mid-day and the flurry of the afternoon; — the progressive stir of carriages, and concussion of pedestrians; — the cabs and horses assembling at the clubs to bear away the flower of this enlightened metropolis from the perusal of newspapers, to the performance of those great parliamentary and dinnerary duties which are to supply pabulum for the newspapers they are to read the following day: — the frantic pace of chariots dashing from the important business of buying ribbons and laces, to the important business of displaying them in the Park! — When moving *with* the crowd, one sees nothing of all this; but when, in anxious suspense that renders every moment critical, one becomes tortured by the noise of the crowd and almost insulted by their factitious and aimless activity, it is scarcely possible to abstain from raising one's hands to Heaven, or exclaiming —

Quid trepides in usum  
Poscentis ævi pauca?

Who is to be master of his own mind in the midst of all this hubbub? — People presume to sit in judgment on the actions of a London man, in the quietude of a country library whose philosophical tranquillity is disturbed only by a gnat buzzing in the window, and where the ticking of one's own Breguet becomes distinct of enunciation as the silver voice of Queen Victoria from her throne; — without taking into the account of his errors of omission and commission, the tumult of his existence, — the rumbling of drays, — the rattling of omnibuses, — the crying of mackerel, — the grinding of barrel organs, — the shrieking of the "Light of other Days," — the knocks, single, double, seven-fold, ten-fold, perpetually thundering in his ear, — the galloping of horses, — the braying, or rather talking, of asses — *ἰππων μ' ἀκυπιδῶν ἀμφὶ ἵππος οὐατὰ βάλκει!*

How is a man to keep his judgment clear as Lyndhurst's, or his temper unruffled as Normanby's, amid such "damnable iteration?" — I do not consider my nerves much more excitable than other people's, even now that gout and colchicum have done their worst upon me; and at that time, unless after a hard day's whist succeeding a hard day's tennis, my hand was tolerably steady. — But I very well remember that, by seven o'clock on the day of Chippenham's duel, my left hand would have been sorely in request to assist my right in conveying a glass of wine to my lips.

The boy lived of course with his parents in Grosvenor Square; and it struck me, that my surest way of hearing news of any of the party, was to take up my quarters at Lord Mereworth's. The venerable porter was now reinstated in the hall, — (Giacomino, the Calabrian, having soon fretted himself into an atrophy in a country where macaroni and poignards are tabooed, and been posted back to Naples,) and though old Peter assured me that my lord was down at the House, and my lady not yet returned from a breakfast at Percy's Cross, I had no difficulty in obtaining leave to wait for them in the drawing-room. The groom of the chambers obligingly forced the evening papers upon me, to beguile the time; — little suspecting what anxious thoughts rendered all foreign aid superfluous.

There was I, installed in the corner of that very sofa, which I had once trembled to approach, and which was now no more to me than one of the sofas at Crockey's, listening, mole-eared, to every unusual sound in the house or even in the street, which I fancied might announce a catastrophe. What would become of that doating father and mother if their son were brought home dead, or desperately wounded!

My mind was haunted by the eager looks with which Mereworth and his wife had watched the progress of Chippenham's devotion to Jane, at Ormington Hall, under the proud sanction of her father and grandfather; — their undisguised joy in the hope of his early settlement in life, and the perpetuation of their name in two beings so nobly endowed to do it honour. — Their subsequent mortification and recent vexation at his sudden change of habits and

character could not obliterate from my mind the brightness of that first day of parental triumph! — Poor souls! — Poor Lady Theresa!

Mereworth was the first to arrive. — He evinced no surprise at finding me established in his house, for of late we had been on friendlier terms than ever; and while still debating in my mind whether to hint the motive of my untimely visit, in came Lady Mereworth from her dejeuner, looking so fair, so serene, and so perfectly unconscious of care, that I had not courage. She was more than usually elated. A royal personage had been complimenting her upon her son; and the silvery accents in which she recounted to her husband platitudes to which they both seemed to assign oracular importance, might have given value to still poorer fragments of the King's English.

I had already invited myself to dine with them *sans façon*, and despatched a note of apology to Connaught Place, where I knew I should be waited for, at a political dinner my brother was going to give that day: — and Mereworth was evidently much more amazed by such a derogation on the part of Cecil as my proposal to wash my hands in his dressing-room and dine in boots, — (dine in dusty boots with Lady Mereworth!) than by any other strangeness of my strange proceedings.

But scarcely did I find myself tête-à-tête with him in the said dressing-room, in the brotherly familiarity of clothes-horses, and sponges, than I could refrain no longer. Tears stood in my eyes as I burst into incoherent explanations of all the torture I had been suffering, — all he might have to suffer.

I should be sorry to have my hand *often* grasped, as Mereworth did mine in the spasmodic agony of his soul: — Highland Cameron's hand-shaking being gentleness by comparison! — Some minutes elapsed before he could utter a syllable. — His first words were — "CECIL! — *his poor mother!*"

We agreed between us that since, after-all, my apprehensions might be premature, nothing should be said at present to alarm her. — But a confidential servant was despatched to Walsingham House, to bring the earliest tidings of Frank; and another posted in the Square, to

intimate privately to Lord Mereworth the arrival of any messenger likely to bring news of his son.

Never shall I forget that dinner ! We three sat down, — with Chippenham's place vacant, opposite to me ; — two of us in a state of uneasiness, difficult to describe ; and poor Lady Mereworth, poor Theresa, gentle and smiling as usual, talking of her son every now and then in a confiding happy tone that brought tears into our eyes. I saw Mereworth grow paler and paler, as the moments passed slowly on. The dinner was interminable. — I, usually so indulgent on such occasions, cursed in my soul the pertinacity of the French cook, who kept us waiting two minutes for the *fondue*, that it might be wafted before us as becomes a *fondue*, light and scorching as a lover's sigh ; — and after all, it was spoiled by a *petit point de Parmesan* too much !

We sat it out, however, heroically ; — and if I wanted to record a miracle of manly courage, would enlarge upon the assumed cheerfulness with which poor Mereworth, with his brow moistened by cold dews of agony, indulged the prattle of his wife. — Every now and then, I could see his eye transfix, as some murmur in the distance met his ear ; for the Square was now as quiet as becomes all aristocratic neighbourhoods at feeding time, from eight till ten ; — and we were pretty sure of hearing in the dining-room what might chance in the hall. Whatever the extent of the evil, interference or prevention was now impossible. All the poor father had to do was to exercise his fortitude ; and he fulfilled the duty in a manner that made me blush for my former misappreciation of his philosophy.

At length, the rattle of a hack-cab, suddenly ceasing a door or two distant from the house, caused the blood to mount into the pale face of Mereworth, and our eyes to meet with significant anxiety.

"Won't you order coffee for us, Theresa ?" said he, in a hoarse voice to his wife, — to whom he had probably never before in his life afforded a hint to leave the dining-room. — "Cecil wants to get off early to the opera."

Lady Mereworth instantly rose from table ; and I stood holding open the dining-room door for her, to make sure

that she passed the vestibule and staircase, before any communication took place with the hall.

• “Thank heaven!” I inwardly murmured, when she was out of sight;—and at that moment, the hand of Mereworth, who had approached me in the interval, pressed heavily on my shoulder. On turning round, I saw him ghastly as death, and scarcely able to support himself, awaiting the opening of that red baize door, which was to convey his sentence of life or death.

For we had already heard a hurried ring at the bell, in connection with the stopping of the cab; and the servants in the outer hall were only waiting the departure of the Countess, to announce the result. — Poor, poor Mereworth! — Who would be a father to go through such an ordeal? — Thank heaven I am still a bachelor! Give me the Pyrrhonic beatitudes of ataraxis, — the *poco-curante* tranquillity of a luxurious indifference, — before all the family sensibilities in the world!

Blessed be the gods, it was Chippenham himself who at length made his appearance at that open door; — dishevelled, haggard, and evidently intent upon a furtive entrance into the house. Almost before he had discovered his father and myself on the threshold, Mereworth had dragged him in by the sleeve into the dining-room, and closed the door upon him. He did not upbraid him, — he did not question him, — he did not so much as inquire whether he was a murderer! — *He was alive*, and that was enough! — Claspings the young man to his breast, he called him his child — *not* his son, — his “dear, dear child!” — kissing his cheeks as he had probably never done before since his days of childhood. — And the tears poured down his own as he did it!

I was inexpressibly affected. — The death of Nelson was always rendered more grievous to me by the touch of nature conveyed in the kiss demanded by the dying hero of Hardy, — the human tenderness of a great mind, than by all the clamour of Gazettes or flourish of historiographers.

When we had begun to breathe a little, I noticed that, amid the general joy, Chippenham, though deeply moved, betrayed no token of satisfaction. He was alive, — he was safe. — Alas! — Where was Frank? — Reading my

anxiety in my eyes, "Go to him!" whispered he—"The wound is severe; but I earnestly trust not dangerous."

I snatched up my hat. The hack-cab might not yet have driven off; and though it was difficult to withdraw from the contemplation of such exquisite human felicity as frightened poor Mereworth's countenance, I hastened to Walsingham House.—Blockhead!—Frank was not there,—they knew nothing about him; and I had to drive back to Grosvenor Square, and ascertain from Chippenham that I should find my young friend at the Star and Garter at Richmond. They had been interrupted at Wimbledon, and proceeded in the afternoon to Richmond Park;—where their purpose was accomplished, and so thoroughly accomplished, that ten minutest afterwards Frank was borne insensible, from loss of blood, into the hotel.

While waiting for Mereworth's carriage, which he insisted on having out to take me to Richmond, I was rejoiced to find that this untoward incident was already exercising the most desirable influence on Chippenham's mind. His generous nature had flung off the scum of passion; and he was now eager to admit that the duel was of his own provoking, and that the sole offence of Frank Walsingham consisted in being an object of preference to my niece.

It was no moment to increase his care and remorse by a lecture—though I dare say Mereworth said enough after I was gone.—I was quite satisfied from his manner of naming Frank, and his earnest entreaty to me to bring him back speedy news, that he had not only made the *amende honorable*, but was more deeply concerned in the result for Frank's sake than for his own.

Let such of my readers as do not rejoice in so good a cook as to secure them a bad heart, (for I am convinced that half the heartlessness of the great world proceeds from the preponderating efforts of their digestion,) enter into the state of my feelings that night between Hyde Park Corner and the Richmond Gate!—A whole day elapsed, without so much as an attempt to ascertain to what sort of penance Mary might have been condemned for my sins!—a whole day of torment and suspense, to

that gentle soul! — It was bad enough to be hurrying down to Frank Walsingham, with the certainty of finding him in torture, and the probability of finding him in danger, — harassed all the time by a dread lest the cause of the duel should transpire, to the utter mortification of my brother; — without being perplexed by visions of Mary's pale face and downcast eyes. — I swear there was a moment as I was crossing Putney Bridge, when I was half inclined to return!

And after all, what did I gain by my journey? — It was twelve by the time I reached the Star and Garter, and Walsingham was asleep! — Even Mitchelston, who had good-naturedly refused to leave him, was dozing on the sofa, so overcome by the agitations of the day, that he could explain no more than I knew already from Chippenham; *i.e.*, that the ball had passed through the fleshy part of the arm, and that unless fever came on upon the morrow, there was no danger.

All I could do was to send him to bed and assume his place as nurse — (Frank's servant being a mere tiger); and despatch back Mereworth's carriage to town, with news as vague and unsatisfactory as a royal bulletin.

That night, I watched in the room adjoining Frank's bed-chamber, and had at least the satisfaction of knowing myself to be a somewhat more intelligent attendant than Mitchelston; — nor was it till all the house was astir with the morning light, that I allowed myself to fall off to sleep. — My waking thoughts had been disagreeable enough, and my dreams only served to re-produce them in a more painful and disconnected shape; and it was from a vision of finding Mary stretched cold and breathless on the turf under the wall of Richmond Park, shot through the heart by Frank Walsingham, to whom Lady Mitchelston (disguised like the famous Countess of Shrewsbury as a page) officiated as second, that I was roused by the sudden apparition of three things still more disagreeable than even that evil dream; — to wit — the surgeon with his instruments, — the waiter with a newspaper containing a most offensive account of the duel, — and Lord Rotherhithe, with a face full of sapient meanings but no more feeling than the face of the parish clock!

I suppose others besides myself must have had occa-



sion to notice that events of the highest import to the happiness of nations are often leaden footed on the road to publicity, while every idle tale of scandal reaches the press (to borrow a simile of Lessing,) "**Schnell, als der Uebergang dem Guten zum Bösen.**"

This duel, — what did it matter to the public at large? — A quarrel between two foolish boys, who, in the good old times of bags and swords, would have fought it out ten minutes afterwards in the Mall, shaken hands on the ground, and supped together in Privy Gardens afterwards, with a flask or two of Burgundy. Yet I swear there was as much said about it, true and false, in the morning papers, as there had been about the siege of Antwerp! — Frank was represented as in a hopeless state, — Chippenham as having fled the country; and the cause of their dispute was pointed out with a degree of obscurity intended to render all doubt on the subject impossible, as "a competition for the hand of the beautiful and accomplished Miss D\*\*by, only daughter of the Honourable Member for the County Palatine of L." —

All this was very provoking. It needed the comfortable assurances afforded by the medical men that their patient was going on favourably, to reconcile me to the idea of the notoriety thus shamefully affixed to my niece. — Poor Danby! — Right well could I appreciate his vexation; and I swear it was quite as much to afford him the poor comfort in my power, and to satisfy the anxieties of Chippenham, that I soon afterwards agreed to leave Frank under the surveillance of his brother, — as to institute those inquiries in Bruton Street which it was indispensable to bring to an issue.

On the whole, I think I was rash; for I knew that Rotherhithe, having read the paragraphs in the papers, must be aware that it was his own brother and not Chippenham who was the secret cause of his recent rejection in Connaught Place; and nothing would have been easier to administer three teaspoonfuls of the anodyne mixture ordered for Frank instead of one! — It must have been bitterly irritating to the Viscount to be supplanted by his reckless youngest brother; — and even his frigid nature might be warmed to frenzy by so public a certification of the fact!

Had the stories regarded any other man than Frank

Walsingham, the newspapers would have been a fortnight spelling out particulars, enabling them to make the secret a secret for millions. — But, as I said at first, Frank was one of those unlucky dogs, who cannot put to sea without bringing on a tempest !

---

## CHAPTER VII.

Oh ! dearest father, in this agony  
Of pleasure and of pain, — even while I kiss  
Thy garment's hem with transport, can it be  
That doubt should mingle with my filial joy ? — BYRON.

THAT day I was early in Connaught place. — Dear Jane and her father were my first objects on visiting London. I had promised the poor fellow at Richmond it should be so.

Most eager was I to know, before I saw Danby, whether Lord Ormington had been there, — for it made worlds of difference whether my brother had been influenced in his perusal of the paragraphs in the papers, by his own clear equitable judgment, or the judgment of other people.

I was not fated to learn. He was out when I reached his house ; and my sister Julia, who was with her niece, came to the dressing-room door when I knocked for admittance. I would rather have seen Jane alone ; for something reflective of Herries in his wife, always inspired me with distrust. — But there was no help for it. — I must see them together, or leave the message of Frank Walsingham unsaid. — Mrs. Herries attempted for a moment to dissuade me from coming in at all ; on pretence that the poor girl was still too much overpowered by the explanation which had taken place between them to be in a state for conversation. — But the moment Jane caught the sound of my voice she rushed forward, and for the first time in her life threw her arms round my neck and wept bitterly.

“ You have seen him, — I *know* you have seen him ! ” cried she, drawing me into the room. — “ Dear Cecil ! — will he, — *will he die* ! ”

“ Compose yourself, Jane ! — Compose yourself, dear

Jenny," said I, placing her by the side of my sister on the sofa. — "Walsingham is in no immediate danger. — He and Chippenham are happily reconciled. All is on the most satisfactory footing. — A foolish quarrel at Crockford's was the origin of their meeting."

"Do not mislead her, Cecil: — by my husband's advice I have told her the whole truth," interrupted Julia, with calm severity. — "Half the evils in this world arise from deceiving ourselves and others. — The affliction by which you see Jane so much overcome at this moment, is the consequence of having dealt disingenuously with her father. She had never given him the slightest reason to surmise her attachment to your friend Mr. Walsingham; and has consequently to lament that the blow of this cruel perplexity will fall on him as a double grievance."

"At all events, I see no particular advantage in aggravating her affliction," said I, as the tears of my poor niece flowed anew from beneath the fair slender hands now clasped over her face. — "I have not been more in Jane's or Walsingham's confidence than yourself; but, aware that one of them is in a state of bodily and the other of mental suffering, I am more inclined to soothe the troubles of two persons I dearly love; than indulge in the sense of my own superior wisdom."

Jane pressed nearer to me as I spoke. Amid the miseries and terrors surrounding her, she seemed to have found a friend.

"I have not yet seen my father," whispered she; — "and oh! if you knew how I dread the meeting! — He, who shuns and contemn the idea of newspaper notoriety, — to find *my* name — the name of the daughter to whom he has so devoted himself, — a mark for the scorn of the world!"

"Do not deceive yourself or let others deceive you by the influence of high sounding words," said I, in a tone of expostulation, addressing itself to Julia. — "That the newspapers should have pointed you out, dear Jane, as the innocent cause of a quarrel between the sons of the Earls of Mereworth and Walsingham, is far from rendering you a mark for what you childishly term the scorn of the world. — Frank Walsingham is a younger son, — but he is not an adventurer, — he is not —"

"He is one on whom you well know that her father would never bestow her hand!" — cried Mrs. Herries, with indignation. — "To have her name publicly accoupled with his, therefore, is a serious misfortune; and I own I am amazed, Cecil, to find *you* sanctioning and abetting the preposterous pretensions of your friend."

"Inquire of Jane, if you think it worth while," said I, calmly, "how far I have been the advocate of Frank Walsingham, or indeed whether I ever mentioned his name to her, till this day! — Danby has a right to exact a much higher alliance for his daughter, and I should be the last person on earth to suggest opposition to any choice of his. I see no good purpose, however, in wounding her feelings by allowing her to suppose herself degraded in the estimation of society."

Longer than enough was the argument continued; — poor Jane persisting in the belief that she was disgraced for ever, — and Mrs. Herries in the conviction that Frank Walsingham was a designing fortune-hunter; while I stood to my opinion, that the brother of Lord Rotherhithe ought not to be thus disparaged by those who set so inordinate a value upon himself.

Julia had acquired from her husband a sort of sententious dictatorial way of setting people's feelings at nought, which is one of the least fascinating forms of superiority; and she was delivering her axioms in a style to do honour to the Rector of a Scottish University, or a Professor of Political Economy, utterly regardless of the tears of her niece, or the frowns of my indignation, when the door was quietly opened, and Danby stood among us.

I do believe that he came prepared, — not to reprove or revile, — of that he was incapable, — but to say, — "My child, whom I so love, — why have you deceived me?"

But no sooner had he caught sight of his daughter's distress, and perceived that she had been already exposed to oburgation, than every adverse feeling subsided: and he walked straight across the room, and took her silently into his arms as if bestowing his benediction upon her for the first time in his life.

My brother's face was turned towards me as he pressed his daughter fervently to his bosom, — pale, — calm, — and expressive of the holiest and most hallowing tender-

ness. Never shall I forget the unearthly elevation of his countenance. — He looked as he *was*, overcoming by self-conquest the mortal feelings of an immortal nature.

I vow to Heaven there were moments when the face of Danby, albeit far from beautiful of feature, exhibited all that the most inspired imagination of the ancient masters ever imparted to that of the Saviour of mankind. And well it might! — for what human imagination can conceive higher attributes of the divinity, than the humility of a great mind, or the exercise of power only as a means of grace to the deserving, and mercy to those who have offended!

Without one jarring atom form'd,

Danby was indeed of more than human excellence! — I did not hear the words he addressed to his daughter. They were so very, *very* low, that one could only surmise their soothing nature by the agony of penitent grief with which she clung anew to his bosom. — His consolations were doubtless such as he felt her mother would have whispered to her from the grave; and when he had spoken them, he gave one heavy sigh, as if to save his heart from bursting.

I felt that even his brother and sister had no business to be present at such an interview. But Julia was beginning to prose again; — and even my earnest sympathy was a something to interpose between his angelic spirit and her worldly wisdom.

He sat down on the sofa, — mechanically, like a person who, stunned by a violent blow, has scarcely yet recovered the use of his faculties; but still encircling the waist of his daughter with his arm, as though he felt that at such a moment, she stood more than usually in need of kindness and protection. But Jane had not yet dared to raise her eyes to his face; rendered more conscious of her gracelessness through his tender forbearance, than by the aid of all the reproaches in the world.

His first word was a generous one.

“I have been with Mereworth,” said he, in a voice I could scarcely recognise as his. “I find from Lord Chippenham that the blame of this unfortunate business rests entirely with himself. Whatever other accusation may

be made against Mr. Walsingham, it appears that in the present instance, he has behaved with temper, courage, and gentlemanly feeling."

Could there be a more generous mode of comforting the wounded feelings of his child !

Julia was evidently vexed to perceive that Danby displayed neither severity to the offending Jane, nor coldness to the offending Cecil ; for *she* was one of those who delight in a rigid measure of justice. The consequence was that she soon took leave, and I accompanied her out, feeling that two people sincerely attached to each other, had always better be left to the interpretation of their own hearts.

After seeing and satisfying the Mereworths and their son, I hurried home. Another letter from Bruton Street ! — not from Marcia, — but from Lady Crutchley ; — calling me to account for my conduct to her daughter in the terms that are called no measured terms, when one means to designate the strong language of May Fair.

Take it from me, dear sex, who am so generally recognized your advocate as to be called the female solicitor-general, that out of every four letters you write, you had better burn two ; out of every four notes, — whether *billets-doux*, or *billets-amers*, — three and three quarters. — (Now for an apothegm — Ahem ! ) Half the actions, — whether of love or immorality, of modern times and fashionable life, arise from the abuse of the crowquill. — You *cannot* write much or write often, without writing nonsense.

I wish the Crutchley correspondence had contained nothing *worse* than nonsense ! — I have occasionally been called harsh names in tender letters indited by fair hands ; and like the roughness of the pine-apple, the fruit has been only the sweeter for that harsh exterior. But those two old women were bitter to the core. — It is one's own fault to be sure, if one drive one's cab against a mud-cart ; but the splashing is not the less disagreeable till dried and brushed off.

I believe, however, she had some slight justification. In patriarchal times, before the deluge of course, promise-breakers used to be stoned to death.

Previous to brushing off the mud by answering her ladyship's detestable epistle, meanwhile, I was anxious to learn how far the name of my niece might be involved by common report in the recent duel; and accordingly walked from St. James's Place to White's, with a view of meeting and being met by the throng of loungers, the flux and reflux of which, like a train of ants, blackens the pavement at that hour.

It has often been urged by the hyper-critical against the tone of the *School for Scandal*, that it was written by Sheridan before his admittance into the great world, and savours of the littleness of the Bath world rather than the distinction of London bon ton.

I have seen a vast variety of worlds, — both abroad and at home; and must own that the only difference I ever perceived in their greatness or littleness, consisted in the size of their assemblies. — There are as many Mrs. Candours and Sir Benjamin Backbites in Grosvenor Square as in Milsom Street; and the "bullet in the thorax"-scene of the sparkling Comedy was out-bulleted and out-thoraxed that day in St. James's Street, by the thousand and one eyes pelted at my head. — Those idlers of Fashion who pass their lives in blowing the bubbles of smalltalk, would be miserable if, now and then, one of these ærial mischiefs did not rest upon some object of costly furniture, to enhance their sport by the serious detriment occasioned by its explosion.

It would be amazing, (if aught arising from the incivilities of the very civilized, could still produce amazement) to consider the excitement produced in the world of fashion by any event calculated, as the newspapers have it, "to place in mourning a considerable number of families of the highest distinction." An elopement, a duel, a bankruptcy, an anything that wrings to the heart's core people who might otherwise pass through life as heartless, stirs up the vivacity of the clubs like a pinch of bitter kali dropped into the acidity of a glass of lemonade, till the effervescence rouses the satiety of many a jaded palate. — Somebody's carriage is broken, — somebody's heart is broken, — no matter which! — the crowd collects to stare at and talk over the disaster. — And make haste, good people, and talk about it, — for to-morrow the event will be

stale, — shouldered out of notice by some newer or more cruel catastrophe!

If ever I make public my "Idler in England," — (think what a sensation would be excited by CECIL'S "IDLER IN ENGLAND!") instead of telling the world what dukes have dined with me because their duchesses did not choose me to dine with them, or how much I used to pay to Sewell for my hats, or Curlewis for my coats, I will record the bon mots I have heard perpetrated at White's upon the deaths of my friends, and the amazingly droll things said at Crockford's touching the successive ruinations of its members. I swear by Saint Howell and James! I have beheld the beau monde ready to die with laughing at a pun serving to commemorate one of the most dreadful atrocities of social life; — the "rend your hearts," of scriptural exhortation being modernly transmuted into "split your sides."

No sooner did I set my foot over the frontiers of Club land, accordingly, than I was assailed on all sides by assurances that Frank Walsingham was dead, — if not dead, — dying; — that he and my niece had been fetched back when half-way to Gretna Green, or if not half-way to Gretna Green, that they had long been clandestinely engaged; — and that poor little Jane had "sealed her father's eyes close up as oak," and thrown dust in those of her uncle, in order to favour the pretensions of the least reputable of her suitors, while playing fast and loose with the rest. — She had made a fool of Chippenham, they said, and a tool of Rotherhithe; — and some even hinted that reports were afloat of her having hastened to Richmond to attend upon her lover, the moment she heard of the duel.

This part of the scandal, however, I showed such resolute intentions of tracing to the inventor, that, with a view to prevent a second duel, the fountain-head of evil was pointed out in Lady Brettingham. — Beneath my notice, as beneath the respect of honest men! The woman capable of rendering her youth and beauty subservient to — But remember Boccaccio's advice, friend CECIL, "*e riservate questo per la predica!*"

Half an hour ago, I had some thoughts of playing false with my dear Public, as regards one or two particulars



of my proceedings that day. But on reconsidering the matter, I feel that it has not merited the slightest reserve on my part. — I will therefore candidly admit that the *real* object of girding on fresh boots to my feet, previous to sitting down and answering Lady Crutchley's letter, arose from my desire to saunter along Bruton Street on the opposite side of the way to the door bearing her ladyship's name on the door-plate. Mary was, of course, incapable of the vulgarity of staring out of the window. — Still, chance sometimes favours one with glimpses of a fair head, between a Venetian blind and a mignonette-box. It was just possible I might obtain ocular proof that the poor child's eyes were less red on Wednesday afternoon, than Monday night; — though there was every reason to fear that the interim must have been an unquiet one.

But alas! that hateful old woman, as if fated to do nothing on earth for the satisfaction of her fellow-creatures, — abided on the sunny side of the way! — Every blind was drawn down, — every window hermetically sealed! — The house looked like any other house of the neighbourhood; — nothing to distinguish it from the rest, more than distinguishes from its fellows the oyster concealing the pearl beyond price that is to convey opulence and distinction to its future favoured possessor.

I suppose it was the impossibility of catching so much as a glimpse of Mary's shadow on the wall, that inspired me with the necessary ungraciousness to indite, in terms as positive as those of a bill in chancery, my withdrawal of all pretension to the hand of Miss Crutchley. — My allusions to another attachment were at present vague and mysterious; but the resignation of my claims upon the favour of the heiress, unmistakable.

I took occasion to observe in my last chapter that the first letter of the virtuous Marcia was indited in the frightfullest handwriting I ever beheld. But I protest that it merited a calligraphic prize, compared with the spiteful looking characters, — the chevaux de frise on Bath post, — purporting to convey a rejoinder to my polite refusal of office under the Crutchley Administration. — The conjurations of the Scottish witch, by whom the storm was raised to keep

Anne of Denmark out of Leith harbour, can scarcely have been concocted in hieroglyphics more truly diabolical.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! — Forty-four years of age, and threatened with an action for breach of promise of marriage by the wealthiest heiress in Great Britain! — At what amount would the gentlemen of the long robe or gentlemen of the short robe, or whatever they may be by whom these matrimonial appraisements are assessed, presume to lay the damages? — What was supposed to be the prime cost, errors excepted, of CECIL? — Conceive my personal merits, weighed in the balance against two hundred and fifty-five thousand pounds, odd shillings, consols, Tchindagore Park, — and a capital family mansion looking sideways into Berkeley Square! — What glorious fun for the newspapers, — what nuts for the clubs!

O, Plutus! — for what was I reserved! — The fate of Aline, reine de Golconde, that queen of diamonds so naïvely portrayed by the goldfinch's-quill of the charming Chevalier de Boufflers, was mere common-place compared with mine.

*Lætus in præsens animus, quod ultra est  
Oderit curare!*

To be belaboured to death with ingots, — smothered in Bank of England notes, — and have it inscribed for epitaph on my tombstone — “BY CASH!”

I own I never expected, in the maturity of my years, to have the sterling amount all London was disputing as its redemption from the King's Bench, fling itself with such wilful prodigality at my feet!

It was quite clear to *me* that if the heiress persisted in her threat of bringing the matter into court, it could only be as a pretext for raising herself cent. per cent. in the matrimonial market, by the publication of my letters. It is true they were not of a very torrid nature: — as a man of letters, I am habitually cautious. Word of mouth and word of pen ought to be synonymous as regards matters of finance; — but in affairs of the heart, as different as the pace of Satirist from the slow but sure-footed amble of a Spanish mule. — Conceive what vipers would have been hatched in the bosom of a thousand respectable families; had I given the reign to my Pegasus, and committed to

wire wove the whispers in which I committed *myself*! *Que de couleuvres à avaler pour les maris* if, by some sort of Photographic process, the heart of CECIL had been factually portrayed in his correspondence!

The epistles, therefore, through the reflection of whose brightness the un-fair Marcia intended to shine for a moment as the Juliet of the Court of un-Common Pleas, consisted simply in such little notes as —

"I shall have the pleasure of joining your party to-night at Covent Garden.

Much your's,  
Cecil Danby.

"St. James's Place, Monday."

Or,

"Enchanted, dear Miss Crutchley, to wait upon you to-day. You are well aware how much my time is at your service.

Faithfully your's,  
Cecil Danby.

"White's, Tuesday."

Or,

"You have made me very happy by appointing a day for our expedition to the Dulwich Gallery. Rely upon me.

Always your's,  
Cecil Danby."

But though notes such as these are probably received every day of her life by every woman in May Fair between twenty and forty years of age, in quantities to suffice, when properly shred into flakes, for a snow storm in the Christmas pantomime, — imagine, dear Public, the distinction likely to be conferred on that ungainly woman, when it came to be lawfully known that CECIL had signed himself "MUCH HER'S!" — that Cecil's time had been at *her* service! — that CECIL had been "made happy" by any concession she could offer! — "FAITHFULLY *her's*," indeed! — How could she be such an idiot as to believe it!

The Douglasses, Stanleys, Butlers, and others of the highest and mightiest families of our aristocracy, preserve among their peerage archives certain royal letters, of higher import, as a matter of history, than even their letters patent of nobility.

But what were even the most "private and confidential" of these, compared with a note dated from White's and subscribed with the name of CECIL, to a woman of bony structure and stony heart, whose hand deserved to be pressed only with a pair of insect tongs! — Faugh!

She felt of course that her fortune, had it been to make, would have been centupled by even the flimsiest of those sterling notes.

Moreover, I was sure of the Clubs in my favour; — and with *their* verdict secure, what man in his senses cares a minnikin pin for the utmost rigour of the law? — The woman of ten thousand was *no* favourite. She had behaved shabbily to Lord George Hartingfield, and infamously to De Greyvin; and the younger brothers were vehement in opposition.

He who was to avenge their cause on Miss Crutchley, had at length appeared! Like the damsel of Smyrna described by La Bruyère, — "*cette fille infortunée perdit le sommeil, ne voulut plus manger; et la jeunesse de Smyrne qui l'avait vu si fière et si insensible, trouva que les dieux l'avaient trop punie.*" —

Well! there must come a time of atonement for all this! — "Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness!" says Shakspeare's madman, who talks such exquisite reason; — and if those who give the devil his due receive retributive justice in return, there is every chance that CECIL the Coxcomb may go a fishing in his Imperial company!

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

Good, my lord!

You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me. I  
Return those duties back as are right fit,  
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.  
But he whose hand must take my plight, shall carry  
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.

SHAKSPEARE.

SUCH of my readers as do not happen to be curious in the treatment of gun-shot wounds, will gladly dispense with the particulars of Frank Walsingham's convalescence. —

So popular a fellow could not fail to have the good wishes of hundreds in his favour; and with the exception of one or two *very* romantic young persons, who had flattered themselves, he would die in order that they might go into consumptions, everybody in London was rejoiced when it became known that he was sufficiently recovered to be removed to Walsingham House.

To the honour of the Star and Garter be it spoken, nothing had transpired to the world of certain interviews which had taken place there between the Hon. John Danby and Right Hon. Earl of Walsingham. — But even had waiters and wainscots proved false, it was scarcely likely to be surmised that these meetings were for the purpose of taking into consideration the preliminaries of a marriage between the offspring of the respective parties.

The agitation and distress occasioned by the danger of my friend Frank, had served to acquaint my brother with a circumstance which, under any other circumstances, would probably have been kept a profound secret from him; — namely, that Jane had been passionately attached to my young friend from the first moment of their acquaintance: and that now, at the close of the second year, and after the courtship of half a dozen suitors of the highest pretensions, she remained of opinion she could never be happy as the wife of any other man.

The blow was bitter to my brother, — the struggle of his feelings great. — But he saw her grievously committed in the eyes of the world, — grievously humiliated in her own, — grievously wounded in heart and soul. — He was afraid, I have sometimes thought, of estranging her affections further from himself; or rather, perhaps, afraid of seeming to visit upon her, by the exercise of his better judgment, her disregard of *his* feelings in her choice. — For he had not been a week aware of Jane's attachment and the warmth of feeling with which it was returned, before he commissioned me to speak to Frank upon the subject; and proceeded to open a communication with Lord Walsingham!

Could I have presumed to offer counsel to a man like Danby, I think I should almost have advised him to abstain from the latter measure. For I knew more of the Earl than *he* did; and rightly judged that though willing

to treat, as between crowned heads, for the hand of his precious Viscount, he regarded all ceremony concerning his junior branches altogether superfluous. — Anybody was welcome to one of his younger sons, who chose to take him. — He saw no occasion, and Danby suggested none, to increase Frank Walsingham's allowance of three hundred a year; and when Danby proposed to give the young people two thousand and a house in Connaught Place, Lord Walsingham looked upon him with compassion not unmingled with contempt, as that phenomenon of civilized life, a Prodigal Father.

An interview far more to the purpose, but I suspect far more painful to my brother, was the one with Frank, in which he did not grant, but *offer* his consent to his marriage. — Knowing it to be impossible for Walsingham to hazard proposals, without a guinea for settlements, or a prospect beyond obscurity and want, he spoke first and to the purpose; — nor, but that I was present and heard him, could I have supposed it possible to accord so generous a concession with so little the air of a benefactor.

Odi homines ignavâ operâ, philosophiâ sententiâ;

but the simplicity of Danby's manners, and abstinence from all profession, rendered the magnanimity of *his* actions a thousand times more striking.

Every one, however, did not admire him as much as I did: every one did not enter into the intensity of his paternal love. Lord Ormington was furious. Lord Ormington had set his heart upon seeing his grand-daughter a Countess, — and seemed to loathe the idea of a poor Honourable all the more that it reminded him of the detested Cecil. *A Mrs. Walsingham!* — the beautiful, — the accomplished, — the wealthy Miss Danby, *a Mrs. Walsingham!* — I verily believe he would as soon have seen her in her grave. — Though now nearly eighty years of age, with him this barren world and its distinctions were still all in all!

Of course, the whole offence was laid at my door. — His Lordship and his Lordship's own man settled it between them that I had wantonly and maliciously introduced Frank Walsingham to my niece; sacrificing her as the victim of my spendthrift friend, lest by her form

tion of some illustrious alliance, my brother should be induced to charge the family estates to increase her inheritance.

It was useless to vindicate myself. I could not do so without admitting, which kindness to Frank forbade, my heartfelt regret at the marriage. Nobody understood the inequalities of the match half so well as I did. Nobody but myself was acquainted alike with the cultivated intelligence of my niece, and the total want of information, or taste for information, of Walsingham. Jane had found his conversation amusing without perceiving that all it unfolded was picked up in conversation; that, as Richelieu said of some superficial man, though too poor to have a shirt, he had furnished himself with a pair of ruffles. What would become of her pleasure in his society when the ruffles were worn out? — when the chime of his empty liveliness had ceased to charm? — Oh! what a companion for life to succeed to such a father as hers!

No need however for rueful anticipations at such a moment. There were plenty of people envious of his good fortune, to depreciate Frank Walsingham, without the name of his friend Cecil being subscribed to the list. Herries and his wife, stanch partisans of that active member — (of the House, not society) — Lord Rotherhithe, were stupendously displeased at the marriage; — the Mere-worths, — and who could not forgive them, — were bitter against both Jane and the bridegroom; nay, all London was of opinion that Miss Danby could scarcely have done worse. Her repentance was anticipated as if bespoken and paid for, and as sure to come home to her as her wedding gown.

I scarcely allowed myself to lose sight of my brother; for though I knew that, having once made up his mind on premises known only to himself, nothing would shake his resolution, it is easier to make up one's mind than one's heart. *His* was shaken to the centre. It was my duty to support him by all the companionship he would accept; — and let me do myself the justice to say that he accepted it gratefully. He was glad to have my arm to lean on, in his walks. He was glad to be with one who, he knew, participated genuinely in his affection for that lovely girl. After all, family sympathy is a holy — a *thrice* holy bond!

So unflinching was the rectitude of his judgment, that in this instance, as in that of the death of his son, Danby did not a moment misjudge the extent of my culpability. He knew that Frank's introduction to my niece, through my means, was accidental; and that, if in my power, I would have made any sacrifice to obtain her hand and affections for Mereworth's son. He was too noble to require of me an admission of my regret at what had occurred. He saw that I felt it, — and that was enough.

As if to intimate in a more decided manner his displeasure at all that Danby was doing for his daughter, the old Lord not only set off for Ormington Hall while the preparations for the wedding were proceeding, but the sudden setting up of a scaffolding round the dilapidated old house in Hanover Square intimated to the world at large his intentions of taking a new lease of his life. He had issued orders for putting it into complete repair, and refurnishing it on a liberal scale; — perhaps to alarm his son with the threat of a new Lady Ormington; — but in reality that Herries and his wife might become his inmates. This, perhaps, was for the best. He was now what the world calls "breaking," when it means "a little cracked." The succession of his family disappointments had wrought him into a state of irritability of mind scarcely to be described; and irritability of mind, when conjoined with infirmity of body, is a doubly lamentable condition. I agreed with Danby that it would be better for all parties that Julia and her husband should afford him the support and comfort of their society. It was desirable that his Lordship should make his exit from the world in all the respectability becoming his fortune and condition.

These family events, and trifling as they may seem to my readers, no family event is trifling within the circle of one's family, luckily preserved me from tearing the scanty remnant of my ambrosial curls remaining, with vexation at the state of my private affairs. — The people in Bruton Street, who, little as they had pretended to value me when assured of calling me their own, now all but frantic for my loss, when about reviling me in society as a vile and perjured man, — a promise-breaker, — a Lovelace! — Though evidently still hoping that the breach might be repaired, and that the grim heiress would eventually figure



as the lady of Ormington Hall, (after first exciting the envy of her sex as the Hon. Mrs. Cecil,) — they went on widening it and widening it by all the aggravations in their power. — They sent their lawyer to demand justice, — they sent a fire eating E. I. C. Colonel cousin, hot and yellow as a currie, to demand reparation, — they sent insolent letters, — they sent coaxing messages ; everything that was most odious and offensive. — In return, I sent only my compliments, and wishes for their better health and better temper.

After all, I had acted by Miss Crutchley as she had acted by half a dozen other men ; accepted her attentions on the footing of a lover, and finding my courage unequal to the rash act of matrimony, recoiled on the brink of the precipice. For my part, I am amazed that any man or woman should resent the repentance that precedes, instead of following, an indissoluble union. The virtuous Marcia ought to have thanked me on her knees for victimizing her by my fickleness ; — for had I made it a point of honour to persevere in my addresses, even the fear of the Old Bailey before my eyes would not have prevented me from playing Blue Beard, on finding such a face upon my pillow ! It would have been only wise in her to seek a more suitable suit.

Tigris agit rabida cum tigride pacem  
Perpetuam.

My readers will doubtless have already concluded that before I ventured to throw down the gauntlet thus resolutely to Bruton Street, Mary was no longer its inmate. I contrived to ascertain through O'Brien that she had departed in peace to her own modest and quiet home, — and that she was the hundred and sixteenth daughter, or thereabouts, of a Yorkshire Curate, the nephew of the late Sir Marmaduke Crutchley. — I trust they may not think the worse of me for my candid admission that Mary, pale and broken-hearted under the oppression of her tyrants, and Mary merry and jovial among a tribe of little ragged brothers and sisters, greasy with roast mutton and Yorkshire pudding, — were as distinct as *la tragédie et la petite pièce*. All the poetry of the case had disappeared. — The poor girl was doubtless very happy again in her

natural element; darning linen, and teaching the ideas of her little bores of brothers how to shoot. But it was utterly impossible for Cecil Danby to hurl himself like a star from his sphere, with the certainty of falling into a bean-stack or a barley-mow

To point a moral and adorn a tale.

Had my attention been undivided at the moment of her evanishment from London, so great was the momentary excitement of my feelings, that I will not swear, poor dear child, I might not have lost myself for ever for her sake. But I was fortunately too deeply engrossed for three following weeks by the state of my brother's feelings, to think of much besides Danby, Walsingham, and Jane; — and when, finally at liberty to devote myself to my pale white rose, I heard from O'Brien that the Bruton Street butler talked of her mother as a very decent woman who had dined in the housekeeper's room, and carried Mary off into the country by the heavy coach, I naturally reminded myself that I owed too much to CECIL, and CECIL a great deal too much to society, to play the fool in so very foolish a manner of playing it: I ought to have seen all this from the first. But

in rebus quoque apertis noscere possis  
Si non advertus animum, proinde esse quasi omni  
Tempore semotæ fuerint, longeque remotæ,

Mary in Bruton Street, and Mary in the North Riding, were as different in their influence as a cannon ball innocuous on Woolwich Warren, or winging its errand of death on the plains of Talavera. No doubt she had accomplished the great purpose of her existence by preventing my being sacrificed by *fieri facias*, to the Moloch of Tchindagore Park.

I wish, by the way, that for the benefit of all lovers of the picturesque, I could perpetuate the look of amazement of the legal adviser into whose hands I was compelled to throw the disagreeable office of answering the majestic Marcia's lawyer's letters! — forced to accompany my brother several days in the week to a stately mansion in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the Deed Palace of the present representatives of "the old established house of

Messrs. Hanmer and Snatch," (which now, like the city of York, sent two members to parliament,) I took occasion one day to consult the advising partner, touching the tenability of the claims of the Crutchleys. I did not, of course, imagine they were able to marry me against my will; but I wished to know whether I and my letters were likely to cut so ridiculous a figure at the assizes, as to render it advisable to compromise the matter by accepting the ten thousand a year and its incumbent, and appearing with the plaintiff at Court instead of *in court*.

The archives of the house of Hanmer and Snatch contained, I suppose, a sufficient record of my real position in the Danby family, to inspire its present Grand Inquisitor, Mr. Scriven Screwham, with no *very* exalted idea of my consequence; and when he found me threatened with the utmost rigour of the law, unless I condescended to accept two hundred and fifty thousand pounds consols, and Tchindagore Park, he surveyed me with a look of wonder and dismay, such as an Amphytrion in the play bends upon Jupiter, when shooting upwards to Olympus, like a Congreve rocket, after condescending to accept a supper and bed at his house! From that day, he bowed almost lower to me than to Danby, when we entered the office. He assured me, of course, that I had nothing to fear; — that people who, like the Crutchleys, could pay for the best advice, would be better advised than to make themselves ridiculous, not at my expense, but at their own. Mr. S. S. (who in spite of his initials was not a sower of sedition), ventured indeed to insinuate something about the desirableness of re-considering the matter, before I rejected such prospects. — But I silenced him by a look. It is amazing what looks one can put on, when one is refusing ten thousand a year!

Meanwhile, the wedding day in Connaught Place was approaching; and Frank and Jane were as happy as happy could be. Walsingham had all but recovered from his wound. There remained only enough of illness to justify such care and thoughtfulness on the part of his young bride, as, but for the pretext of indisposition, she had not dared to avow. Lucky dog! — Instead of being forced to the *petits soins* of a lover, *petits soins* were forced upon him! — A place was prepared for him in the corner

of the sofa, and a footstool placed at his feet, almost as assiduously as if for CECIL.

I do not suppose poor Jane fully appreciated the sacrifice her father was making, or she would have been more reserved in the manifestations of her attachment. But unused to disguise a thought or feeling, she seemed to take delight in rewarding herself for the two years of reserve she had undergone, by the free avowal of her present happiness. She evidently fancied that Walsingham was to be as much loved and cherished by her father, as by herself. — Infatuated by the influence of a first love, she never perceived the incompetency of Frank to become his companion. When Walsingham sometimes indulged in those ebullitions of youthful spirits which delighted Jane and amused me, — I have seen Danby struggle to look pleased, — anxious only lest the effort of his indulgence should be apparent. — No doubt, in his soul he thought the madcap insupportable, but bore with him for the sake of his child.

“Let her only be happy,” whispered he to me one day, in a broken voice, taking my arm to hurry away from the house, where Frank, in the buoyant spirits of triumphant joy, had been trying upon his bride some tire or trinket presented to her as a wedding gift. — “But when I reflect upon the moment of disenchantment, when all this levity will appear to her in its true light! —”

“Jane is young and gay,” pleaded I. — “We must not expect her to feel and think with our thoughts and feelings.”

“I do *not* — God forbid she should! — God forbid she should ever suffer from such distracting thoughts as mine are now,” — exclaimed Danby with an impetuosity very unusual to him. “But she would have found in young Chippénham as much sprightliness and animation as in this man, — combined with intelligence to appreciate her talents, and steadiness to do her honour in life!” — Oh! Cecil — what will be her destiny! — How will she bear the littleness of a mind like his, and the littleness of fortune from which such insignificance is inseparable. — But why do I allow myself to be betrayed into the discussion!” faltered he, suddenly interrupting himself, — “I had hoped

to have embraced the decree of Providence without a murmur."

A few days afterwards, when Frank had been committing himself by giving loose opinions in politics, in his presence, and worse still, in presence of my sister and Herries, in the sort of reckless, boyish manner in which

fools rush in where seraphs fear to tread,

Danby took me aside, and hinted his desire to accelerate the preparations for the marriage. At first, he had anxiously asked for time, as if to reconcile himself to the event. He now wished the wedding to be hurried. He seemed to doubt whether his fortitude and patience would hold out to the end.

"As a son-in-law, perhaps, I shall look upon him in a different light," said he, in a despairing tone. — "But so long as the connection is not irrevocable, I permit myself to dwell upon it till my anxieties distract me. — I am often unreasonable, — often peevish with that poor girl! — and since no longer the doating fond indulgent father I once was, let me at least supply the deficiency by a more affectionate companion!"

It was not very difficult, of course, to hasten the wedding. I almost agreed with Danby; for never had I seen Frank Walsingham so flighty as now, in the wildness of his joy. — The sobriety of domestic life might perhaps render him more rational.

Already, I had pledged myself to Danby to accompany him on a tour to the Continent. — On his own account he felt an urgent necessity for change of air and scene; and the projected domestication of Lord Ormington with the Herries's, restored to him the command of his time. He seemed to think, too, that Frank would never feel himself thoroughly at home in Connaught Place, so long as *his* authority was the ruling influence.

We promised ourselves to visit Italy; and the idea of such a journey, with such a companion, had been indeed enchanting, but that the manifestly wasting person and diminished strength and appetite of my brother, induced me to fear he entertained apprehensions of deeper cause for changing climate than he permitted himself to acknowledge. But though I saw he was ill, as he did not choose

to avow it I respected his reserve so far as to take no notice; accepting the air of assumed cheerfulness with which he indulged in anticipations of our visit to Paris, as if as heartfelt as my own.

I seldom left him now. — The daily and hourly reminders of the approaching event that left him no moment free, — the arrival of wedding clothes and jewels and presents, — all the paraphernalia of what is called “the happy event,” were less perceptible so long as I was on the spot, to supply the companionship which the pre-occupation of his daughter left wanting.

One day, I was with him in the library as he was putting aside his books and papers, preparatory to the long absence he meditated from England; and I could see by the expression of his countenance, though I pretended to be absorbed in a book, that many of the letters which fell under his hand, and which he either destroyed, or placed in the secret drawer of his travelling desk, bore reference to Lady Susan or little Arthur.

His back was turned towards me; but once, when the sound of a suppressed sob met my ear, I could not refrain from looking up. — A large glass opposite the table reflected all the emotions of my brother as he stood contemplating a long brown ringlet, bringing my poor sister-in-law so clearly before me, that even my own eyes were suffused with tears!

A moment afterwards, I saw him replace it carefully in a paper, containing a soft fair curl: — I may have been mistaken — but it seemed to me slightly matted with a dark spot, — as if bearing indications too sad to think of, of the cruel end of that blessed child! — Poor, — *poor* Arthur!

Nothing ensued to make me openly aware of the agony of mind he had been enduring; and when he spoke again, it was as nearly as possible in his usual voice. Only when I rose to assist him in placing the heavier books in the cases, and as there fell from a new edition of Dante some pencil notes in his handwriting I asked him whether the papers were to be left in the work, he answered, in a voice whose despairing hollowness it would be difficult to describe, “No, — destroy them! — It is no matter now! — They were for *her*. I thought we should have read the

book together. — All *that* is over. — I have lost my child!  
— We shall never read, — never feel together again !”

## CHAPTER IX.

O you kind gods!  
Cure this great breach in his abused nature.  
Th' untun'd and jarring senses, oh ! wind up  
Of this child-changed father !

SHAKESPEARE.

Quid dulcius hominum generi a natura datum est, quam sui cuique  
liberi ? — TULL.

SOME great writer, (who is it ? — Bacon, Goldsmith — the two extremes of art and nature, or immortal Billy who combines both ?) no matter whom, — has observed that the most touching spectacle this world affords is “ a good man struggling with adversity !”

Heaven knows exactly what the great writer meant by adversity ; — if Bacon, probably an attachment for high treason, — if Goldsmith, a tax-gatherer's warrant, or tailor's bill. — But in *my* enlarged sense of the word, for adversity reading mental affliction, I swear I had sooner see twenty malefactors turned off — (I was going to say at Tyburn, — but even though born previous to the assembling of the States General, I am not old enough to remember Tyburnizing,) twenty malefactors, then, done justice to, than witness the struggles of such a mind as Danby's under its present bereavement. — For, after all, to lose the affections dearest to us on earth, and through no fault of our own or theirs, is as much a bereavement as any decreed by the implacable hand of death !

I hesitated, if I remember, about the propriety of making public the incidents connected with Lady Ormington's death-bed. — I do *not* hesitate to decline saying a word of my brother's anguish on his daughter's wedding day. — I had been with him when poor little Arthur's coffin was lowered into the family vault : — I had never seen him thoroughly unmanned till now !

Licet hic considere : non est  
Cantandum, res vera agitur !

We arrived at Paris. — (I can't help it, dear reader, — you must accept me as you find me, — and take all the rest for granted till, as I say again) — we arrived at Paris. — There was a great deal for Danby to see, on which I confidently relied to attract and distract his attention; and so sincere were his exertions to get the better of his feelings, that he visited all the public monuments, made acquaintance with all the public men, and applied the full force of his powerful understanding to the consideration of the institutions and habits of a new country. — It was the first time he had ever quitted England; and though the superficial changes which startle vulgar observers had little effect on *him*, the total transition of nature and human nature around him, could not be altogether without influence.

I was surprised to perceive that, unambitious as had been his career, the senatorial value of Danby was as well understood by Louis Philippe, Broglie, Molé, and the conscript fathers of Parisian politics, as if his name had been draggle-tailed through Europe at the end of protocols or treaties. It is one thing to ground one's consequence on a pedestal of despatch boxes, and another to find it borne aloft on the respect of public opinion. — The sages of the times were fully aware that the intelligence and eloquence of my brother were to every recent public measure, as the invisible foundations of a monumental structure, to its ostensible elevation. — No one knew better than the King of the French that he could not have created his glorious arch of triumph overlooking the Champs Elysées, but for the five and twenty feet of granite below the soil, securing its solidity; or that the liberal cause would have fallen prostrate, but for the unseen support of my brother.

We had a pleasant time of it enough. — The court was at Neuilly, which preserved us from the Kotoo of the Tuileries; — and with all possible respect for the many excellencies of the Orleans family, I fear I could scarcely have put on the right serious face which Tommy Moore says he cannot call up to read Leigh Hunt, to look with respect upon the gravities of a court, wherein Madame la Comtesse de St. Gratien was "*dame pour accompagner.*"

With a *guimpe* rising to her throat, with a turban as severe as a judge's cap of condemnation, with a face as



acid as Bourdeaux ordinaire, with a general severity of air and principle worthy of a Camarera Mayor, or the "principal" of some "Select Establishment for Young Ladies" at Turnham Green, Madame la Comtesse, a widow wedded to the grave of her spouse and the proprieties of life as never widow was, since the days of Penelope, stood forth the paragon and pattern-woman of the new court. — Long habits of imposition had rendered her so expert an impostor, that I verily believe she imposed even on herself; and when explaining to my brother the cultivation of the white mulberry at Neuilly and disputing upon the mysteries of the silk trade, I vow I could almost have believed her, as the Queen did, an amalgamation of the Seven Wise Virgins rolled into one.

One of the merits politically attributed to Madame la Comtesse in her vocation, was her familiarity with foreign languages and foreign personages, — (she best could tell how acquired!) The English in particular: — her former intimacy with the Lady Ormingtons of the day became invaluable. — Of course she committed the grossest blunders, both as regards persons and politics; but blunders, if enhanced by airs of Spanish gravity, and conveyed in sonorous words, are, in certain circumstances, as good as gold; — witness the actor at the Portsmouth Theatre, who, imperfect in his part of Barbarossa, filled up the rant with

Did not I,  
By that brave knight Sir Sidney Smith assisted,  
And in conjunction with the gallant Nelson,  
Drive Buonaparte and his fierce marauders  
From Egypt's shores! —

which drew down thunders of applause!

Madame la Comtesse had lately been doing the honours of the court to Lord Harris; and aware of his former position as a Court favourite, and recent one as Ambassador, had fallen into the error of supposing him what she called a man of state, — meaning a statesman.

What would I not have given to have beheld the supposed statesman in her clutches! — Imagine anybody talking Machiavel to Harris! Some *mauvais plaisant* (Henry Fox most likely) had given her to read in the onset of her career as an *intrigante*, as a manual of English

politics, the works of Shaftesbury; and it seems she had been inflicting the Cabal upon *him* as she formerly inflicted Lingard upon *me*! — as when dear Lady — is ingenuous enough, at her concerts, to twiddle one of Dr. Arne's pastoralities about Delia or Strephon, between "Sulla Tomba," and "Alla pace."

Harris, whose politics were about as enlightened as those of a common councilman or a Welsh squire, was utterly bewildered. In his gross ignorance of all things not pertaining to a tailor's or perfumer's shop, — the cellar or the kitchen, — he fancied that all the rubbish she was talking applied to the only English reign in which he was interested; and began to tremble and turn pale at the idea of the intrigues in the midst of which he had boozed and bowed in such peaceful unconsciousness. Enchanted by the impression she produced, Madame la Comtesse grew still more emphatic, still more mysterious; and Lord Harris will believe to his dying-day that the most awful and confidential revelations were made to him in the Salle de Minerve of the palace of the Tuileries, by one of her Majesty the Queen of the French's ladies in waiting! — I believe he asked for an audience of the Foreign Secretary, on his return to England, to confide these terrible disclosures: and some day or other, they will appear in his memoirs, with a note by the editor, saying, he "does not quite understand the meaning of the late lamented lord, but that this momentous secret was evidently something vital to the political interests of the country!" — Nay, in the 30th century, some numskull of an historian in New York, then the Athens of the world, will probably fish out these memoirs, — rare as the trunk-makers can make them, and write "A few elucidations on the mysterious Cabal of the reign of George IV;" — whereupon the Quarterly Review of Cincinnati will call him a pains-taking and luminous writer; and Canning and Wellington will come to pass for dupes, and Madame la Comtesse for a new Princesse des Ursins. — "*Et voilà comme on écrit l'histoire*!"

Paris, however, was not our object. My brother was eager to push on for Italy. — He was panting for a brighter sky, — a nobler range of landscape. — How often does the sickness of the soul inspire these physical aspir-

ings! — As the mind grows weary of its bondage and discovers how little it can effect on earth of great or good purposes, it becomes impatient of all tangible barriers, as if *they* were the impediments to thought and action! — Alas! — it was not the low vales of England, — its bounded horizon, — its nebulous sky — which had limited the measures and thwarted the happiness of my brother! — The littleness of society, the deteriorating influence of the world, the frivolities of civilized life must still keep narrowing and narrowing the circle of philosophical aspiration, let the eternal Apennines uplift their heads as they may, or the bending of the shore by Cajeta be beauteous as in the days of Cicero!

In early youth, it seems so easy to achieve great things! — We foresee no obstacles, — we conceive not the force of trifling impediments; and like a gladiator surveying the arena clear of spectators or antagonists, fore-hear the plaudits of the populace and are sanguine of our crown of laurels. It is not till he hath been traileed, bruised and bleeding in the dust, amid the hootings of the crowd, that the Athlet is made to understand the true admeasurement of his weakness, and the preponderating majesty of the multitude.

But it was not from a dream of mere ambition that Danby had been disenchanted. His *mind* had never seen visions, — it was his *heart*! — those who ground their earthly happiness on being “loved much,” are sure of having to lament over “the baseless fabric of a vision,” as the illuminati who pretend to regenerate public morals, or instruct the exchequer in paying off the National Debt!

Quod verum atque decens curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum.

There is no time to be great in this world! — We were not *meant* to be great: — we were sent here to be good. — “And now, my dear Cecil,” (as Colman said to Bonnel Thornton when they were writing alternate papers in the *Connoisseur* —) “sit down and tell them that VIRTUE IS A FINE THING!”

It was an age since I had been in Italy; and it really behoves an Englishman to make a Sabbatical journey thither to worship the sun, once in seven years, as if out of his indentures to the gloom of Great Britain. I had grown so heartsick of the hollowness of London with all

its crushing despotism of vulgar opinion, that it was like waking in the Elysian fields to find oneself in Florence ; that bride of my early affections, to which, though often faithless, I return again and again with delight, — to find her still and ever arrayed in her chaplet of orange flowers and carcanets of Benvenuto Cellini. — The very name of the Arno has music for my ear : — *Cara CARISSIMA Cristina !*

We had not been two days at Schneider's before Danby fell seriously ill. — The Embassy sent its physician, who assured me his indisposition was the mere result of change of climate, — “ no uncommon circumstance when men of mature age like myself and my brother — acclimatized from infancy in the gelid atmosphere of England, hazarded a tour in Italy during the summer months.” — Jackass ! — There was no good in telling *him* that the disorder was a fever of the spirits, — the result of torture from being

Stretch'd on the rack of this rough world ;

and whereas though a bad guesser at the origin of the evil, it did not follow that he should be as indifferent a deducer of consequences, I persuaded Danby to follow his advice, and remove to Lucca for change of air.

At that period, Lucca was a grand duchy attached to a picture gallery. Now, alas ! the picture gallery is dispersed hither and thither ; and if the grand duchy be ever heard of in civilized Europe again, it will be, as Tewkesbury is heard of by its mustard, because it is civil enough to grow our sallad oil. — But for Lucca, what should we do for a *mayonnaise* ?

The waters, which the diplomatic doctor fancied a specific for an inward bruise, were sulphurous and noisome, like most of those subterranean kettles of Domdaniel which send forth their fumes among the mountains. — But the place itself was peaceful and pleasant ; uncontaminated, as it happened, by the Thompson and Johnson tribes who so deteriorate the fine landscapes and noble cities of Italy with their vulgarizing opacity ; and induce one to exclaim with Macbeth,

What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug  
Will scour these English hence ?

There was a capital hotel, however, where the Mitchell

stones were abiding; but one could put up with this single grain of Anglicism, in consideration of the Russian Princes and German Countesses and Canonesses, completing the variegated population of the Casa Pagnini.

The weather was heavenly. In Italy, the labour of living lays a less weighty burthen on one's shoulders.—Its nights are brighter than our noons,—its noons more gorgeous than our dreams of Heaven. — Midnight comes not, as in England, arrayed with chilly damps and a mantle of clouds; but scattering fragrant odours from her wings, and wearing a remnant of transparent darkness, like the lace mantillas of the ladies of Seville. — An Italian night is as the slumber of nature, — not its death. — The air appears so pure and balmy, that one can fancy angels wandering upon the earth in such an atmosphere to gather the prayers of mankind, as maidens gather May-dew.

There were several angels, (without counting Lady Mitchelston,) who wandered about amazingly at Lucca;— and I should have found it pleasant, perhaps, to meet them by moonlight alone, or by daylight in flocks and herds, but for my anxiety on account of my brother.

The population of bathing places is much the same all over the world; — ennuyés, intent upon breaking the line of home-monotony, — chevaliers d'industrie, intent upon picking people's pockets with a dice-box, — and a sprinkling of genuine invalids, better pleased to swallow medicine administered in a pleasant scene amid a joyous population, than surrender themselves without a struggle to the martyrdom of apothecarization. On these, the change of air and change of scene often exercises a really important influence; and I was sincerely in hopes the constitution of my brother might derive benefit from the climate of that charming gorge of mountain scenery. — The sparkling river, and the fine old avenue of trees seen from the windows of our villa on the hill-side, afforded a pleasant relief to the eye accustomed to dwell from Connaught Place upon the green dwarfs dotted like little weazened old men about Hyde Park, or the torpid expanse of that decoy of the Humane Society, the Serpentine river. — Even the idlers at the Baths, would, I fancied, be an advantage; as compelling him to exercise the self-command that constitutes the daily drill of worldly life.

I took particular care not to give him out as an invalid. — An invalid obtains too many privileges of inglorious ease. — An invalid enjoys a dispensation from amusing or being amused ; — and though Danby was not of course pursued to that sparkling yet tranquil little nook among the hills, by the greatness of a reputation rendering the task of amusing and being amused a fastidious task or Herculean labour, I was in hopes that his very inauthenticity would stand his friend.

After all, he was only five and forty ; and the fair ones of foreign countries being less attracted than English women by a pink-and-white tincture of skin, or the showiness of superficial dandyism, I could not help fancying that some fair Florentine with arched eyebrows and a cameo profile, might be induced by the musical intonation of his voice and charm of the conversation it embodied, to forget his want of Cecil-ian beauty, — and herself.

I will defy any man (except Danby) to whom one of those cordial beings deigns to devote herself, to remain long insensible. There is something in the frank simplicity of a well conditioned Italian nature, that makes one fling aside one's mask of worldiness, as a man strips off his coat on perceiving his antagonist in a match of fisticuffs, about to appear in *cuerpo* ; — a generous serviceability, begetting devotion in return.

Even if endowed with all Danby's superiorities, I *could* not have resisted the sisterly assiduities of that dear gracious and graceful Princess L \* \* i ! (Princess, however, constitutes so stately and grandiloquent a word in English prose, that I may as well un-princess her on the spot, and call her at once, as her husband and Milanese friends used to call her, and we all *felt* her, "Nunziata !") — It is absurd, however, for such women to pretend to treat one with sisterly assiduities. Nunziata was one of the prettiest creatures I ever beheld. — She was that rare anomaly, an Italian blonde, — the offspring of the Austrian Governor of Milan, by a daughter of one of the noblest houses of old Lombardy. Her hair and complexion, therefore, were of Swabian fairness ; while the outline of her features displayed the indented under lip, the finely chiselled nose, the flexible and expressive eyebrow and oval contour, so often and so ravishingly perpetuated by Titian or Giorgione. —

I could figure to myself one of their auburn Adonises tearing himself from the arms of such a Venus! — I know not how old she was, — eighteen or eight and twenty; — I should as soon have thought of guessing how many hours the rose in my bosom had been diffusing its fragrance, as the age of Princess L \* \* i. — Her beauty, whether of heart or person, was half girl, half woman, — mature as perfection, yet natural as the nature of a child.

From the moment of our introduction, she devoted her time to the reserved but distinguished English invalid. But so distinct is the open-heartedness that calls itself coquetry in Italy, from the coquetry that calls itself open-heartedness in England, that I did not for a single second attribute to *her* the artifices of a Lady Brettingham, or fancy that it was to reach Cecil, she soothed and cherished his elder brother. — I was careful not to point out to him that she *was* soothing him or cherishing, which I knew would cause our post-horses to be ordered on the morrow; but flattered myself that, before he became cognizant of the fact, the silken web would have been spun around him, compelling him to happiness and peace. — And so, I used to ride off and leave them together upon their mules on the mountain side; or seated on the margin of the river listening to each other, and fancying they were listening to its brawling voice. — The most artful of chaperons could not have more maternally protected a flirtation between her fifth daughter and the heir to thirty thousand a year.

But, alas! manœuvres were thrown away upon natures so exalted and so candid as those of Danby and Nunziata. At the end of a week, she talked to me about him as freely as though she had been talking of her child.

“What is the matter with him — I beseech you what is the matter with him?” said she. “Is it of sorrow or disease he is perishing? — For perishing he is! — Believe me or not, as you please, — but that noble bosom has in it the germ of death!”

I could not help feeling that the bosom which resisted *her* tenderness must indeed be half-alive; — but seriously trusted that the surprise of finding one man in the world capable of indifference to her affection, might have deceived her.

"We English are never *very* lively people," said I. — "You must not judge of Danby's cold deportment by comparison with such a *cicada* as Litta, or Cariaty, or any other of your demonstrative countrymen; — nor fancy that, because the serene temper of my brother forms a striking contrast to the arbitrary impetuosity of such talkers as our friend Tchitserchiff, and others of yonder voluble Slavonians, he must be ill!"

"I only wish," she replied, — and methought there were tears in her eyes as she answered me, — "that I was likely to deceive myself! — A person really unhappy — unhappy to death, — is to me a novel spectacle. I have seen people suffer from what are called sorrows of the heart, — poor flimsy sorrows, arising from the levity of some giddy woman, the capriciousness of some ungrateful prince, or the severity of some ambitious father. But I never saw genuine sorrow till now, till *this*; — this is despair, — this is death, — this is that biting frost of the soul which withers up leaf and life together. — There is no re-creating a feeling in that broken, broken heart!"

I knew it. — I began to see that it was so; to see it all the more cruelly that Danby uttered no complaints, either of suffering or sorrow. He tried to talk like other people, — he tried to smile like other people, — he even tried to eat, drink, and sleep like other people. But his food nourished him not, and his sleep afforded no refreshment: — the inward principle of life was rent in twain!

I wish my enemy's dog no bitterer curse than to watch, day after day, the decline of a valued and beloved being, whose enfeeblement it might be fatal to notice. I saw him wasting; — I found him overcome by every trifling fatigue. Yet there was nothing to be done, — nothing to be said, — nothing to be administered. I could only trust to the influence of Time the comforter! — His wound was yet green. I could still trust to time!

It was something to have obtained such an auxiliary as the kind-hearted being who seemed to appreciate intuitively in Danby, the high qualities apparent to *me* through the development of years. Princess L\* \*i was a woman of rare qualities; — one of those who regard the mission of her sex upon earth, as one of peace and consolation; as



though it were the duty of the daughters of Eve to leave no good deed undone in expiation of the fault of the common mother. Wherever a kind act was to be accomplished, an effort of charity performed, *there* was Nunziata!—Like Paraclete the Comforter, her task was a task of mercy; and her passage on earth might have been traced like that of the angels who wandered so familiarly there in the olden time, by the balm dropping from her wings. It is true that, like most women with German blood in their veins, her susceptibilities were morbidly excitable; and the murmur of the wind among the poplars, the shadowing of clouds before the moon, filled her with mystical apprehensions. Nature seemed to speak to Nunziata in other tones than to other mortals, or rather *her* ears were prone to discern hidden meanings in the ordinary tones of nature; and to all these bewilderments of sensibility, was added the energetic demonstrativeness of an Italian nature. The fervid love of art engendered by early association with the fine creations of Italy, suggested higher imaginings than might have been expected from so fair a creature.

She was what is called grossly ignorant; that is, she had little book-learning. But she knew all that can be acquired by an intelligent spirit from the schooling of the noblest objects in nature;—mountains and lakes,—a sky which indeed typifies the Heaven of immortal souls,—an earth which could almost reconcile one to mortality;—and the chef-d'œuvres of ancient art, had looked at her with their earnest eyes, till they imparted a more intimate insight into the prodigies of inspiration. She thought and talked, as though her mind had been schooled among the Mighty Ones who have bequeathed to Italy trophies devised only as decorations of the palaces of the great, yet constituting the highest source of national glory; by creating within the mildewed palace and desolate monastery indications of beauty as divine as the blue skies of Naples, or the misty summits of the Apennines. For the wealth wherewith Italy hath been endowed by Raphael and Titian, Michael Angelo and Salvator Rosa, is a richer dowry than all the withered crowns of laurels, bequeathed by all the Cæsars of the Capitol!

Such a woman was worthy to be the companion of

Danby; the very scholar to sit listening at his feet, while, as with an angel's tongue, he expounded the history of the objects of her veneration; and put even Time under his feet, by calling up anew by the magic of his mild eloquence, the marvels of "the most high and palmy state of Rome;" or investing her own fair province,

The pleasant garden of great Italy,

with its raiment of glory,—as first aroused from the slumber of the night of ages at the revival of the arts, under the sceptre of the great ancestors of Nunziata.

I trusted to this congeniality of spirit to create a friendship, such as that of Alfieri for Madame d'Albany. But when Nunziata sometimes bursts forth in his presence, into one of those gushes of enthusiasm with which the skies and soil of Italy appear to endow her children, as the Alpine heights generate the beauteous streams destined to convey fertility and joy to the vales below, the mind's-ear of Danby listened,—but his heart stopped its ears.—He, to whom the sternness of Dante, the sweetness of Petrarca, the simplicity of Boccaccio, were familiar as household words, seemed as though he did not recognize the currency of that affluence of language, an inheritance to this lovely woman from the immortal fathers of her land's language.

His spirit was far away. His spirit was in the past. His spirit was in the old library at Ormington Hall, with a fair child clinging to his knees, whose mind was nourished by the pelican-like outpourings of his own.—He remembered what his daughter had been;—how sweet, how duteous, how full of promise. He remembered all he had trusted she would become,—

Polite as all her life in courts had been,  
Yet good as she the world had never seen :—

contemplating, with the indulgence of high enlightenment, the weakness of human nature; yet sharing in its mercy and charity, as if undistinguished from the throng.—And to turn from such contemplations to think of her as a toy of a thoughtless boy,—to be loved and laid aside with fifty others when the gloss of novelty was worn away!—To have had his own devotedness, his own paternal adoration,

set at nought for the caprice of a Frank Walsingham ! — And worse than all this, to reflect on all she might become as the companion of the frivolous women and soul-less men, his chosen associates ; —

The thousand sacrilegious cursed hours  
Which such a marriage

might have in store !

No wonder the father's cheek was so wan ; — no wonder he turned so careless an ear to the exalted words or soothing whispers of the dear kind Princess ! — my attention more and more painfully directed to his infirmities, by whose anxious interposition, I soon began to see that his noble mind was, at times, almost overthrown. — After long reveries and solitary walks, his smile became almost ghastly, nor were his words always coherent.

I trembled to perceive it ! — I was alone with him there, in that obscure spot of a foreign country. — As if utterly to divorce himself from thoughts of home, he had chosen at Paris to send back to England his personal attendant and engage a foreign servant. Should any mischance betide him, what might not be said, what might not be surmised, at the instigation of those two hard-hearted old people, Lord Ormington and his own man, who had so little scrupled to heap suppositious crimes upon my head !

From the moment this dreadful idea entered my mind, my life became a penance. — If I lost sight of Danby for an hour, I became terrified to a degree that rendered me far more infirm of judgment than himself. At times, I was almost frantic. I watched him and watched him, yet apprehended nothing so much as that he should suppose me on the watch. — My eye was ever upon him, as though I anticipated hereafter the dread interrogatory that struck terror to the soul of Cain ! — “ **WHERE IS THY BROTHER !** ”

It would not have been so, but for my shameful position in Lord Ormington's family ! This also, — even this last and bitter curse, — was entailed upon me by the fault of my mother !

## CHAPTER X.

Beneath a row  
 Of lemon trees, which there did proudly grow,  
 And with bright stores of golden fruit repay  
 The light they drank from the sun's neighbouring ray,  
 (A small but artful Paradise) they walked.

COWLEY.

Intus et in jecore agro  
 Nascuntur Domini.

PERSIUS.

It is strange enough that I should have discovered in the unusual restlessness of Lord Ormington, demonstrated in setting his house in order, and perpetually travelling from Lancashire to town and home again as a mere relief to his irritability of mind, — symptoms of a final break up of his constitution; yet that it should be from directly contrary indications I inferred mischief for my brother!

Danby, so active, so self-denying, so late a watcher, so early a riser, so untirable a lover of exercise, was now overcome by indolence. — All he seemed to desire was to be let alone in his own room, — where he pretended to occupy himself with books or writing, yet neither wrote nor read; — but sat interrogating the past, — interrogating the future, — interrogating his own soul, as people do in that terrible consciousness of the decay of their mortal nature, when the time that is gone acquires new and terrible existence from its connection with time that is to come. — An expression of the lower Irish Catholics, which I have heard used by O'Brien, of "making one's soul," — (synonymous with the "*faire son salut*" of the French peasant,) has always struck me as more forcible than grotesque!

But even in this occupation, the spiritual desires of my brother were frustrated by the overweening influence of that one affection! — Thoughts of what she was doing, what she was saying, — surmises whether her infatuation were subsiding or happily permanent, overpowered his nobler aspirations and dragged him down to earth. — When in society he heard an anecdote touching upon the follies or vices of the day, I have seen the colour mount

into his wan cheeks, as though Walsingham were expressly designated ; while trivial incidents of the most general nature, were, by the morbid feelings of the broken-hearted father, twisted into connection with Jane.

One day, we had agreed to accompany the L \* \* \* is with the Mitchelstons, to visit at Lucca (which is at a two hour's distance from the Baths) the ducal gallery, then undispersed. — In passing through the city, Danby had been too much indisposed for the effort ; but now that he was what is called convalescent, the Prince, a kind, warm-hearted old man, full of Italian enthusiasm for his country in general, and his little grand duke and little grand duchy in particular, insisted upon showing us the lions of the duodecimo capital. — We were to end the day by dining at his own Palazzo ; where he possessed a fine old library, containing treasures as great in their way as the virgin of the Candelabrum and three Carracci of his royal master.

It was a phenomenon worthy of Italy, by the way, that little Etruscan kingdom ! the coin of whose treasury consisted in Raphaels, Carraccis, Fra Bartolomeos, Guercinos, Barroccios, Domenichinos, Gherardos, and Francias, instead of the vulgar sovereigns, shillings and pence, — livres and louis d'ors, — constituting the palpable effects of such banks as are above issuing I. O. U.s to the public ! The wealth of our friend the Prince was almost equally characteristic ; — consisting nearly as much in cabinets of pietra-dura, containing missals and monkish MSS., as in olive gardens or vineyards. — His fine collections would however have been better placed, both for the sake of the world and the L \* \* i family, in the Ambrosian library at Milan, than in his obscure palace at Lucca, overlooked by all the world save a miserable professor or two, and a few fusty friars.

On visiting the palace, the Prince's librarian recited a sonnet in honour of his illustrissimi English visitors, during which operation Lady Mitchelston giggled so incessantly that the dear good Princess, really believing her English friend to be suffering from an *attaque de nerfs*, presented her with a flacon of one of those delicious Florentine restoratives from Santa Maria di Novello, that seem a concentration of all the sweetness of Italy ; — and at the close of the exhibition of a series of bibliographic pheno-

mena, such as old Droneby would have expired in ecstasy on beholding, (ere he was dunced by lawn sleeves,) the Prince presented to Lord Mitchelston a magnificent Loughi, — the original being in his own gallery, and to my brother half a dozen curious volumes which Danby had signalized by his notice.

That night, as we returned to the Baths, Danby bore better than usual with the prattle of the women of our party; and seemed struck by the effects of the mountain scenery, viewed through the deceptive medium of moonlight, which confers beauty as a veil does on a bride. He seemed even sorry when our refreshing drive was over; and on reaching home, instead of retiring to rest, sat down near the open window to look over the books, the munificent gift of our friend the Principe.

I was reading the newspaper, not attending to him, satisfied that in the pages of Apollonius he would find nothing *very* exciting to his feelings; when chancing suddenly to look up, I found tears dropping heavily from his eyes upon the open book. A minute afterwards, he closed it and left the room; when I had the curiosity to take up the volume, and ascertain by the moistened leaf what passage had thus moved his sensibility.

It was the story of RHÆCUS! — Do my readers happen to know it? — If not, permit me to stand interpreter to that renowned poet of Rhodes, who, in the days of Ptolemy Evergetes succeeded Eratosthenes as librarian at Alexandria; — librarian, not after the fashion of my well-beloved Andrews or trusty Ebers, — but like the learned Pundits at the British Museum, who cannot shake their well-powdered heads but the dust of ages flies out like pepper from a castor; and who every now and then get be-knighted for enlightening our darkness.

In those passing pleasant days of the olden time, when the Earth and Sky were on a more familiar footing than at present, — having a general visiting acquaintance which too frequently rendered gods and demi-gods defendants in Doctors' Commons, and induced goddesses to put on masquerading beards and become private tutors to young gentlemen, as in the case of the son and heir of the wise Ulysses, — one RHÆCUS, a youth of Thessaly, by saving a fine forest-tree from the axe, to which it had been con-

demned by a spendthrift lord in a considerable fall of timber to pay off his score at the Crockey's of Argos, so charmed the heart of its Hamadryad, that she deigned to manifest herself before him in all the beauty of her nymphhood. — RHÆCUS instantly became as much enamoured of the querculana as he had been already pleased with her oak. But the nymph was cruel; and RHÆCUS, (doubtless the man of Thessaly designated even to these our times by the nursery rhyme, as having jumped into a quickset hedge and scratched out both his eyes,) — threw himself into the boughs wherein his beauty of the woods had taken shelter, praying among the leaves for leave to love.

His entreaties were fruitless! Her boughs yielded not to *his* bows, and for every sigh, she gave him a rough bark. The Hamadryad evidently did not care a twig for him! — Yet he remained prostrate in the grass at the foot of her tree, — *latet anguis in herba*.

At length, by dint of daily watering her roots with his tears, Rhæcus contrived to soften that heart of oak. The Hamadryad smiled, or promised to smile, upon him. — A gentle voice whispered to him through the twilight, from amid the waving branches, that in some happy hour when the night breeze was agitating her clustering leaves, and the violets in the turf at her feet were fragrant with the tepid dew of a Grecian midnight, he might return. Renouncing her ethereal superiority, she promised to become his own! — A bee, she said, should murmur the gentle message in his ear, when time and tide prospered their hopes of happiness.

Now RHÆCUS was a *roué*! — By consorting in the theatres and dice-houses with the discarded *vauriens* of Thrace or Attica, — the exquisites of Athens, — the scamps of Rhodes, Rhæcus had acquired a taste for dissipation; — *tranchons le mot*, — he was a decided gambler. One day, as he sat in the porch of a wine-house, throwing dice with Dorsaïodorus and Duncomiades, Fortune showed herself more than usually adverse, — jealous perhaps of the Hamadryad! — Rhæcus was in a vein of ill luck. He had not a talent left, — not even that of divination!

Growing peevish, as losing men are apt to do, he upbraided the gods, the goddesses, and all belonging to them; — when lo! at that moment of irritation, the importunate

hum of an insect murmured in his ear! — Another moment, and it was crushed beneath his sandal! — *Be a Hamadryad's bee, — be the chosen messenger of love, — to be thus wantonly martyred!*

I was always a desperate bad hand at telling a story. I invariably leave out the sting, even when the point lies with a bee. But those who want to read the sad description of the expectant Hamadryad, watching for her dissolute lover, — the gradual perishing of her tree, — the mournful extinction of a fond, deserted woman, devoted heart and soul to an unworthy object, had better study it in the original. — *Vide Apollonius.*

Half a dozen lines describing the anguish of a woman outraged by the ingratitude of him on whom she has squandered her affections, had sent my brother “weeping to his bed!”

At length, the state of his health and mind became so rapidly worse, that I wrote explicitly to my sister begging her to consult confidentially with the Walsinghams and Lord Ormington, as to their joining us on the Continent, or framing some pretext to entreat his return to England. It was a great relief to my mind when the letter was despatched. With that singular power of creating attachments, peculiar to Danby, or more candidly, to the Danby family, my brother had already so wrought upon the regard of Nunziata and the veneration of the Prince, (who admired him as an Admiral Crichton or Picus de Mirandola, as much as the Princess cherished him for the elevation of his views and sweetness of his manners,) that they entreated our permission to accompany us to Genoa; where, on pretence of a right English longing after sea air, I persuaded my brother to indulge me with a three weeks' sojourn, while awaiting the answer to my appeal to Mrs. Herries.

There was something almost ludicrous in the Cicerone-like assiduity of the poor prince, — “The best natur'd man, with the worst natur'd muse,” — who could scarcely forbear exclaiming in the words of Molière's *importun*, “*Je voudrais que quelqu'un s'anisât de vous donner des coups de bâton, pour vous faire voir comme je vous défendrai!*” But his devotedness was quite genuine. He would have gone to the very extremity of the toe of Italy,



to do service to one of the few men in Europe who could construe all the books in the L\*\*i collection without a lexicon! —

We had a pleasant tour of it to the city of palaces; — but on taking up our abode in the Palazzo D— in the Via Balbi, belonging to a half-brother of the Principessa, I felt overpowered by a vague presentiment of evil, which I could as little justify as surmount. — The amphitheatre of hills cutting off the city from the sunny realm beyond, seemed to compel one into fellowship with the dull inmates of those dingy wildernesses of lustreless marble and ponderous velvet, — so much less alive, by the way, than the portraits of their ancestors upon the walls.

Danby was not well enough to take much heed of either the real or pictorial population of our fine apartments, which were richly encrusted with alabaster of Gazzo, elaborate gilding, and fine frescoes. But every day, he used to indulge himself with a lonely saunter up and down the adjoining terrace, whereof the parapet was bordered by orange and lemon trees, and the Indian fig, in colossal vases of sculptured marble; — which commanded a view of the bay over the ledge-like roofs and flower-laden terraces of the city; — the gay and verdure-mantled arches connecting the inequalities of ground in the suburbs; — the promontory of Monte Fino, and the blue waters of the bay, whereon one so readily imagines the fleets of Doria or Durazzo, riding proudly at anchor.

But I suspect that the solitary thoughts of the invalid were neither of the ancient glories of the maritime republic, nor the beauties of the gorgeous city compressed between its ramparts of gulph and mountain. What were the splendours of Santa Maria di Carignano to eyes yearning after the glories of a higher sphere? — His mind was elsewhere. His heart was elsewhere. Who indeed could even conjecture the reveries of a soul like his, when, weary of wrestling with the ills of life, its last struggle consists in a prayer to Heaven that "this cup may pass away!"

A sprinkling of philosophy, it has been said, leads to irreligion, while profound philosophy brings us back to the foot of the altar. — I never saw a mind more thoroughly religious than that of my brother. He was not a man to *argue* of the faith that was in him; but his love of God

was apparent through his love of the creature of God, the surest demonstration of pious gratitude. — He had moved through life a benefactor to all around him; valuing himself only as a means of good to his fellow men.

And now that his task of activity was over, he prepared himself for death, not as one reluctant to tear himself from the things of this world, but as if fearing only it might be criminal to rejoice in his prospects of release. — I could perceive that he felt himself growing worse, by the way in which he gradually overcame his regrets for the child who had renounced him; and began to comfort himself with hopes of rejoining the two not lost but gone before, — the angel and the cherub, — the wife and child, — whom God had called prematurely to HIMSELF, in order to lighten the shadow of Death for one of his elect!

Very often would he sit in silence, looking to the stars, as if lost in holy speculations as to the hour and manner of his reunion with those beloved beings! — What was to me the loss of all hope, was to him its commencement. — *His* life was beginning, because, alas! it was soon to end.

The L \* \* is were even more overpowered than myself by sad forebodings; for my brother's Italian servant confided to them the secret of his sleepless nights and evil symptoms, which he had been forbidden to disclose to myself. — They insisted upon further advice being called in; — and poor Danby smiled as he gave his hand assentingly to Nunziata, in answer to her earnest entreaties.

"*E finito, cara amica!*" said he; — "spare me the only regret I could have to suffer at this moment, — the sight of your tears; and rejoice with me that your's and the Prince's generous friendship, has combined with my brother's devoted attachment, to solace my passage to the grave!"

My Public, — the rain of this pluviose season is beating against my window as I write, and I am neither strong in health nor strong in spirits. — Deign to be indulgent with me, — I would fain expiate upon those ensuing weeks, not for my pleasure, but *your* profit; — for the last days of a good man, like the last days of a bad monarchy, are replete with instruction. But I have not courage enough to write about it. I had hardly strength then to wear an unconscious

countenance, while watching, day after day, the golden sands drop one by one from his hour-glass; — and were I to recur to it now, it would be a gratuitous renewal of torture.

One night, — (though anxious and alarmed, I did not even then suspect that he had only two days to live), — I was roused from sleep by a faint light in my room; and opening my eyes, saw Danby place the watch-light on a distant table, and approached my bed-side. — Thinking me still asleep, he stood with his arms folded, mournfully contemplating me. — “Poor fellow, — poor Cecil!” — murmured he. “A few short days, and he will be lonely in the world, — lonely as I am now!”

After fixing his eyes upon me for many minutes with wistful interest, he placed his cold wasted hand slightly upon mine as it lay on the coverlet; then passed it over his lips. He had abstained from pressing them to *my* hand, lest he should disturb me; yet could not altogether subdue the yearning of that hour of terror after the touch of some congenial thing! — My precious brother! — It was not possible to resist this. — Raising myself on my pillow, I threw my arms around him, and pressed him fondly and fervently to my heart.

“Forgive me!” said he, — “I did not think to disturb you. — I have often before entered your chamber, unobserved, when you were asleep. — I have long lost the comfort of rest; and it reminds me of *them*, dear Cecil, to look upon your face.”

“Be comforted!” said I — “Jane is coming! — Nearly a month since, I wrote to apprise her of your illness, and require her immediate presence. — I am daily — hourly expecting her: — To-morrow, perhaps, she may be in your arms! —”

I could feel him start, folded as he was in mine; and without a word spoken, he relinquished his hold, and, probably lest I should perceive how deeply his feelings were shaken, quitted the room.

Would to heaven my lips had been blistered, ere they hazarded this exciting announcement to the poor invalid! — Till then, he had resigned his mind to a death of calmness and religious consolation. But I had roused the

touch of human tenderness anew in his heart; and its pulses were no longer strong enough to bear the perturbation.

On the morrow, he met me with sparkling eyes and cheeks fevered by excitement. I did not seem to know him again; and Nunziata, when she came with the Prince to pay her daily visit to our apartments, glanced towards me with a heightened colour, as her eye met his. — She saw that nature was preparing for one of her last, desperate efforts.

“Cecil has summoned my daughter hither,” said he, addressing her; — “very unnecessarily; — for after all, with his kind care and the attention of my friends, what can I want more? — But he assures me she is coming. — You will see her, dear Princess! — Do not prepare yourself for one of the regular beauties of your land of beauty. But I think you will admit the countenance of my girl to be interesting. — She is the image of her mother!”

And as he spoke, his eye gleamed, and his cheek flushed, with the unavowed consciousness that his girl was one of the brightest prodigies of creation.

Luckily for me, the L \* \* is were still with us when the post came in. There was no letter for my brother, — there were four for *me*. — Danby saw that they were from England.

“Does she *come*?” said he, in a hoarse voice, when he saw me unfold one of them in Walsingham’s handwriting.

“The Herrieses and Lord Ormington are anxious she should defer the journey,” said I, as calmly as I could. — “It seems that in her present situation, a sea-voyage at this time of year ——”

I did not conclude. My brother had fallen back senseless in his chair; and while the Prince and I were bearing him into his chamber, Nunziata flew off to send for medical assistance.

He had received his death-blow in that cruel disappointment. He knew that all was over for him; — that even if he were to write himself entreating her presence, she must now arrive too late!

What would he have felt had he perused that letter! — Frank Walsingham, though an excellent fellow, was not

a man of refined sensibilities; and gave me half jocularly to understand that it was clear I found my task of nurse to a hypochondriac a bore, and wanted to get companions in the task. His wife's situation was evidently a mere pretext; for he spoke of having country engagements for the winter, at Walsingham Castle and to different members of his family, which would render it very difficult to leave England.

"However," added he, in the last page, "if you think there is any absolute necessity for our being on the spot, *we will come.*"

Even the letters of my sister Julia and her husband were far from what I expected at such a crisis.—Herries informed me that the infirmities of Lord Ormington's health and mind had, since the departure of Danby for the continent, so rapidly increased, that he could not at present take upon himself the responsibility of announcing to him my brother's precarious state.

"I should strongly advise you," wrote the prudent counsellor, "to procure the best advice and attendance for him, and return immediately to England, if your invalid be well enough to attempt the journey. He is clearly too far advanced to derive permanent advantage from mildness of climate.—If he should sink under the exertion, you will have the comfort of knowing that you did your duty in attempting to restore him to the bosom of his family; and under such circumstances, (since it is wiser to be prepared for the worst,) allow me to suggest that Julia and I are of opinion it will be expected that the body should be brought back to England!"

Julia too, — *et tu Brute!* — Oh! the result of spending one's life with a hard-souled, — arid-natured man!

That day was the last of my dear brother's existence! — He called me to his bedside at night, — (he was no longer strong enough to wander to mine;) — and bade me bring him from his desk the paper containing the two locks of hair I had seen him deposit there in Connaught Place. Having taken them out and gazed upon them for a moment, he tried to place them in a gold medallion which he drew from his bosom, and which, till that moment, I had never noticed his wearing.

But his hands were so weak that he could not succeed

in opening the spring; and he was obliged to have recourse to my assistance.

I then readily perceived that the bright brown hair within the locket was that of my niece; — warm, — warm with the warmth of her dying father's heart!

"I had to request of you, Cecil," said he, in a voice the hoarseness of which was only too fatally expressive, — "that this may go with me to my grave. — A foolish wish! — but there is something ——"

He did not find voice to finish the sentence.

"One word more," said he, — after an afflicting pause, during which his hand was enlaced in mine. — "You have often heard me blame the presumption of those who cause their remains to be removed from one land into another. — I feel that I have little pretext for such a wish, — I feel its futility — and despise myself. — But if my dust *could* commingle with that of those loved ones at Ormington! — You have been a faithful brother to me, Cecil; — in this also, even in this, be faithful."

My tears answered for me. — It was a terrible night, — terrible for *me*. — Even for *him*, — so resigned, so good, — it was a terrible night!

On the morrow, he died, — and I was alone!

## CHAPTER XI.

Alles was mit Sehnsucht und Entzücken  
Hier am Staub' ein edles Herz erfüllt,  
Schwindet gleich des Herbstes Sonnenblicken  
Wenn ein Sturm den Horizont umhüllt.  
Die am Abend freudig sich umfassen  
Sieht die Morgenröthe schon erbläßen;  
Selbst der Freundschaft und der Liebe Glück  
Läßt auf Erden keine Spur zurück.

BUT for that earnest death-bed promise to my brother, I would have buried him in Italy; have buried him under that blessed sky, over-shadowed by a tuft of noble pines and cypresses to survive for centuries over his grave.

For I felt that England did not deserve him. England had not prized him as he ought to have been prized, —

had not loved him as he merited to be loved. — Our gloomy family vault, — the refuge of ennobled obscurity, — could send forth no laurels to consecrate his ashes ! — He should have slept his last sleep in that land of the mighty dead whose spirits still sway us from their urns. — There is nothing in commercial, matter-of-fact, prison-discipline England, congenial with the elevation of a soul like his. — Yet how would he have reproved me for such expressions ; he, who estimated all mental superiority by its availability to the melioration of the human race !

I obeyed his injunctions to the letter. — I brought back my dead to rejoin his dead. — I laid his head by the side of Arthur's in the grave ; — and

Blossom and bough lay withered with one blight !

I shall never forget my sensations the first time I attempted to pass an evening in Connaught Place, and found the house looking if possible more bright and cheery than ever. — Blazing winter fires and candle-light, imparted that happy household comfort which I would fain never have witnessed again within those walls ! — Frank Walsingham made no secret of being the happiest of mankind, (I am afraid such is the frailty of our nature, that the removal of his benefactor was a relief !) — and Jane, with her hand clasped in her husband's, and comforted by her prospects of maternity, was more than half reconciled to her loss. The husband had thoroughly superseded the father. — The child to come was beginning to give the preponderating weight to the newer tie. — Such is the order of nature ; and the order of nature, by rooting up our natural attachments, purports only to enhance the value of a world where Love is immutable.

I had returned to England for that one mournful purpose : — it was fulfilled, and I was in haste to depart. CECIL was not wanted. — If Danby had been dispensed with, who was to care for *me* ? — The Walsinghams were happy, — Lord Ormington comfortably domiciled with my sister and her husband in Hanover Square. They were as little to me, as I to them. — I determined to return to the Continent. — If it contained no one I cared about, or who cared for *me*, more than my native coun-

try, it contained at least no hourly mementos of my isolation.

I had business in town connected with the last will of my brother — of which I was executor and trustee for the interests of his daughter, to whom he bequeathed his personality and everything in his power, — which must detain me for a week or two : — and it was in the course of one of my hurried drives from St. James's Place to Lincoln's Inn Fields, that I one day all but locked my wheel, in Long Acre, with that of a tall phaeton, in which, furred to the chin, sat Lord Harris ! — As I live and breathe, the fellow looked me full in the face and cut me dead ! — No, — it was no mistake, — for I said, " How are you, Harris ? " — in my most affable tone, and after a deliberate survey of my person, he turned away. — I dare say I was altered. — Affliction changes people, and mourning changes people ; but does not change them so much that when they say, " how are you," to an old acquaintance, he has the slightest pretence for forgetfulness.

That night at White's, the mystery was explained. I had noticed in our temporary collision that he looked as big as ten Lord Harrises, and half as big as Herries when he was saying " Our relations with Spain. " — His lordship had achieved greatness, by the means through which I had declined having it thrust upon myself. — According to the Spanish proverb, " The toad had said to the tadpole, ' thou art a flower ! ' " — The day was fixed for his union with Tchindagore Park !

On finding from their solicitor and their kinsman the E. I. C. Lt. Col. that the virtuous Marcia had no chance of making herself anything through public chastisement of CECIL, except eminently ridiculous, the Crutchleys had betaken themselves, according to their annual custom, to Cheltenham, for the dejaundicement of the heiress's complexion and the continuance of her ladyship's rubber. — It was there that, after falling out with *me*, they fell in with Lord Harris.

*Tel brille au second rang, qui s'eclipse au premier,*

and the ex-excellency, — a blank in London, — was a prize at Cheltenham.

I know not whether it were poor Sir Marmaduke's in-



surance plate of Seringapatam that inspired the Crutchleys with their taste for Orders: but they doated on a bit of Tabby ribbon; — and on this ground, Harris was the very man for them. On levee days, he shone a star of stars. — During his triumph of favouritism, he had been in correspondence with half the ministers of half the crowned heads of Europe; and *his* letters had been repaid by letters patent. He was not only Guelphed and St. Michael-and-St. Georged at home, but belonged to the Ferdinand of Spain, the Tower and Sword of Portugal, St. George of Russia, Maria Theresa of Austria, Crescent of the Ottoman Empire, Elephant of Denmark, Black and Red Eagle, and the Lord knows how many heraldic birds and beasts beside. — Impossible to see a more complete constellation of a man!

All this had been gorgeous when displayed upon the shrunken dignity of an obsolete Ambassador, the preceding spring: but now that his chest was inflated by the pre-science of ten thousand a year, and his nose beginning to be Bardolphic with renewed anticipations of good cheer, he impended over London as one of the most pompous of its pomposities.

The happy pair were preparing to do it very grand indeed. The Crutchley diamonds and the aigrette of uncut sapphires were resetting; and a glaring town chariot, with festooned window blinds, and a travelling carriage wrought about with divers colours, were on view in the Acre; attracting crowds before the coachmaker's door, as when a royal equipage is being sent out by government as a flummerification to the King of Ashantee, or Prince Royal of the Malaccas. A service of plate with the Harris coat of arms in all its dignities of coronet and supporters, emblazoned in frosted silver upon the sauce boats and salt-cellar, was in preparation at Storr and Mortimer's — a gift from Lady Crutchley, who seemed to fancy that her roast beef would be unpalatable, unless the dish from which it smoked, were dignified by the heraldic specifications of her son-in-law.

Marcia was strangely mistaken, however, if she expected the Lady Grindleshams and Duchesses of Walmer to trouble their heads about a Lady Harris, as they had done about a Miss Crutchley. Ten thousand a year in

the market, and ten thousand a year taking its modest place among the colossal fortunes of the aristocracy, are very different things. The utmost Lord and Lady Harris could hope to achieve was to be accepted on sufferance in a few of the best houses, as new people who, by dint of pains-taking and beating out their gold into leaf for gilding, had attracted notice; and lionizing in a secondary set, where a Lord is always a Lord, even if the Lord knows whom.

I went back to Italy. — I wanted the solace of its climate. — I wanted to escape from the coldness, moral and physical, of England. — England is too prosperous, too busy, for those who are in trouble. — It kicks against the pricks, till one's soul grows bitter with the sense of what *Meta Klopstock* called the friendshiplessness of the land.

In Italy, the floods of noonday light melting into a sort of living darkness, a spiritual clear-obscure that keeps one company during the night season, — the mournful sound of its monastic bells, — the permanence of its perpetual verdure, — accord better with the loneliness of a sorrowing heart.

As the good Prince used often to say, "our very land is a monument, — the monument of a glorious past."

As I passed through Genoa and sojourned a day in the Palazzo D——, in order to ruminate a few solitary hours on the terrace and see the sun go down from its marble height, suspended over the city as I trusted the spirit of him to whom it had been as the garden of Gethsemane now hovered over the spot, conjoined with the eternal harmony of Heaven. It was at once an elevating and depressing thought to consider how little that great mind had effected of the noble purposes of its youth: how human affections preponderating over its inspirations, had clung to the wings of Genius and impeded their flight. It is almost always thus! — But for such deteriorating influences, great men would become *too* great! — While the mean and trivial fret themselves into notoriety, hundreds of mighty souls are hourly crushed by the contending afflictions and littlenesses of life, —

And live and die unheard  
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

The name of Danby, which ought to be united with the brightest records of the land's language, will, in a few years, be forgotten; nay, is already forgotten:—that of Brummell,—nay, even that of CECIL,—is more widely known. What atoms are the best of us in the scale of creation!—Our only fault is to dream of being more than atoms!—That majestic mind is gone to rejoin the rampart of light whose brightness surrounds the Eternal Throne;—and when one reflects on that ultimate destination, how poor the award of a discoloured marble in Westminster Abbey,—of a likeness in the printseller's windows,—or a few dusty volumes on the shelves of the booksellers!

My readers will of course sagaciously conclude that my object in Italy was to rejoin the Prince and Princess. There was a sweetness in the one, a sobriety in the other, according well with my saddened mood.—I knew I should be perfectly happy with them,—I *was* perfectly happy with them—because my perfection of present happiness was to be reflective,—tranquil,—finding my joy in human affection, and my peace in that which passeth human understanding.

In compassion to my restlessness, they accompanied me on a tour through Switzerland; that chaos of fertility and barrenness, where one seems to come to a closer hug with nature; and the only mountain scenery with which I am acquainted where the echoes of the rocks do not repeat the signal of the bandit's whistle.—I was very sincere in the declaration which Miss Vavasour had thought proper to treat as rhodomontade,—of hating the labour of visiting picturesque countries. But the moment one gets out of conceit with the world, and desirous of approaching nearer to the sphere of disembodied spirits, one begins to love the solitary mountain top whose rude surface repels the iron share of cultivation, and where even the Alpine plant trembles as it extends its fibres.

Nunziata's sympathy was with me both in heart and soul as regarded our mutual bereavement; and soothing indeed was such sympathy as hers!

Lachrymæque decoræ  
Gratior et pulchro veniens in corpore virtus?

In the autumn, when weary of wandering, we betook ourselves to a beautiful villa belonging to the Prince, among the vineyards, a couple of miles from Lucca. It was a beautiful spot. A mountain river, brawling through the grounds, formed a curious contrast with the immobility of the marble statues looking out upon its fruitless turmoil from their niches in the clipped hedges of arbutus and box. Around the house, were cool arcades, and temples of verdure, — all formality, — all quietude ; — and the alcoves were covered in, at that season of abundance, with clusters of purple grapes, as if purposely to refresh us between the pauses of the books we read aloud, when weary of conversation.

Nunziata had a voice that seemed to render the numbers of Petrarca or Filicaja still more melodious ; and

*Lire des vers touchans, les lire d'un coeur pur  
C'est prier, c'est pleurer, et le mal est moins dur !*

My brother seemed always in the midst of us as I sat listening, in those green bowers, to holy or noble sentiments. For when my gentle friend grew weary of her task, and I felt unequal to indulge her with Shakspeare or Byron, the Prince kindly took his turn by reciting passages of his favourite classics, — the origin I am afraid of those shreds and patches of learning which I have never since been able to eradicate from my brain ; and which cause my pages to appear, as was good-naturedly observed by one of my best friends, as though I had been at a feast of the poets and stolen the scraps.

If I *did* steal them it was because quite satisfied that the good old man should talk Greek to *me*, so long as my thoughts remained Hebrew to *him*. — My being there at all was as strange as the presence of the palm-trees flourishing in a snug nook of those delicious gardens, — natives of a far clime, and cherished rather for their associations with things brighter and holier than themselves, than for their intrinsic merit.

I was almost afraid I should weary the L\*\*is, or they me, if I spent the winter with them, as they wished, at Lucca. — The habits of a small city, even if embroidered

with a court, are usually so observant and so communicative of observation, that I was apprehensive my position might be an awkward one. — I little knew Italy! — Italian society is, of all European communities, that which troubles itself least about its neighbours' business. — 'The L<sup>\*\*\*</sup>'s were adored; Nunziata as the mother of the poor, the Prince as the father of letters — good citizens, — lending each in their way their most effective aid to the commonweal. — It is impossible to conceive a happier existence than awaited the favoured stranger within their gates! — But "*heureux le peuple*," says Montesquieu, "*dont l'histoire est ennuyeuse*;" and "*ennuyeuse est l'histoire*," say I, — where people are perfectly happy. — There is no occasion to put my Public to sleep with the lullaby of our domestic happiness. Heaven knows it has little need of narcotics, just now that the wisdom of the new ministry is about to place us upon velvet and wrap us in cotton for the remainder of our days.

At that very period, by the way, pretty nearly the same wooden ninepins were set up, for a new game of politics. — The Whigs had just been singularly non-plussed. — *De trop, ou de trop peu, partout dans ce monde*; and they were lost by losing the noble lord who speechified for them in the Commons, and being unable to lose the noble lord who speechified for them out of the Lords: — Lord Brougham's ex-parliamentary eloquence, and Lord Spencer's political demise, rendering it necessary to be-Torify the country! — *Tout chemin mène à Rome!* They fetched Sir Robert Peel out of the corner and put Lord Melbourne in the corner; and we in Italy, while philosophizing over the English newspapers, in our luxurious superiority to the jars of states and statesmen, could not forbear smiling at the oracular manifesto to Tamworth, promising and vowing to undo nothing which had cause the country to be *undone*; and to do nothing which should cause the country to be *done*: — the old story! — Some people thought the new broom better than the old Brougham, as a broom that seemed to stick at nothing. — But after all the promising and vowing, I cannot call to mind much that was done by that immaculate ministry, except to make Sir James Scarlet a peer.

It was perhaps to console the Eternal City for the loss of Sir Robert Peel, extracted from it like an eye-tooth by the pincers of a government courier, or perhaps because I flattered myself that *I* might be fetched home to be placed like a patch over the raggedness of the affairs of the nation, that I persuaded Nunziata and her husband to conclude the winter, or rather commence the spring, at Rome. — We were there for the Holy Week; and a soothing thing it is to dwell in a house which, undivided against itself in matters of religion, continues to lay at the foot of the altar its tribute of all that is fairest to eye or ear; — sweet music, — sweet flowers, — sweet incense, — sweet portraiture of saintly faces, — in addition to prostration of soul, and thankfulness of heart. While the English Parliament was squabbling with the Dissenters, and plundering and persecuting in the name of the Lords by rendering the sacraments of the faith a constabulary question, and dogmatizing in the same breath concerning tithes, rates, and the thirty-nine articles, — (the venerable Mother Church screaming all the time like a Lucretia!) — it was delightful to offer up our prayers through the harmonies of Pergolese, and dwell together in unity with our Christian brethren!

It has been said that no one appreciates the courage of Luther, till he has assisted at the Easter ceremonies of St. Peter's. Stern as it was, I suspect it would have quailed had he anticipated the number of schisms into which *his* schism would be subdivided; a Babelonic confusion intended by the great fountain head of religious faith to frustrate the ambition of those who would fain ascend to heaven by distinctions altogether of this world.

As usual, all nations and languages were collected together at Rome for the annual glorification; — among the English, the Mitchelstons, who had been waltzing away the winter at Naples; and the Mereworths who, released from official thralldom, had brought their son to the Continent to spare him the pain of witnessing the happiness of his first love as a wife and mother.

In my opinion, they had better have stayed at home. People who are encouraged to make pets of their griefs till, like other pets, they become overgrown and insup-

portable, are far less likely to be cured, than by exposure to the coercion of society of their own class and country. We stand far more in awe of the sneers of our familiar friends, than of a stranger. With his doating parents at his feet, and careless of the opinions of persons he was seeing for the first time and might never see again, Chippenham was growing abrupt, ungracious, and self-opinionated.

The Italians shrugged their shoulders and called him an original! Even I saw him in some danger of becoming that odious thing — “an oddity.”

I detest singularity. In youth, it is an impertinence, — in mature age, a blunder. Wise people, compelled to move in a crowd, move *with* it, in order to avoid a struggle in which the crowd must ever have the best of it. A man may entertain peculiar opinions; but to proclaim them by bray of trumpet, is worthy of an ass.

“*Le pain de la vérité,*” says a great writer, “*n’est pas fait pour toutes les bouches. On prend un engagement onéreux contre le monde, dès qu’on rompt en visière avec ses avis et son langage!*” — for the world is naturally ready to hurl a stone at him who acts as though he felt himself its superior.

I do not wonder that the lad was disgusted with London. As a *parti*, the eldest son of a wealthy peer, he had undergone all the besiegement which is either the most amusing or the most provoking thing in the world. Such molestations must be taken tragically, or comically, — there is no medium. If free in hand and heart to divert oneself, it is pleasant enough to make dupes by affecting dupehood; and pretending to fall into a trap, so as to bring the Lady Grindleshams to the springe. But Chipp chose to take matters *au tragique*. Chipp, whose wounds were still smarting, was not in the humour to turn the tables. It bored him to death to have fifty notes to answer before he was up, from fifty ladyships having Emilys or Lauras to dispose of, — proposing parties to Richmond, or parties to the play. Young ladies forced down a man’s throat, become as nauseous as any other dose of physic; and like the hunted beaver, the angry boy had ended by offering to bite off his coronet and throw it to the chaperons.

Seriously, I believe he *did* answer an invitation to Grindlesham Park, by stating not that he was engaged, but that he had no mind to *be* engaged; "that he was not a marrying man." — Lady Mereworth assured me her son had made enemies without end in London, by his haughty mode of snapping asunder the matrimonial *lasso* that Almacks had tried to fling around him; the generous impulses of youth being still too hot in his bosom to be repressed by the Tartufferie of polite life.

Saving for the interval of a few weeks, I had now been more than a year and a half absent from England; and till this reunion with a thorough-going London party, had almost divested myself of my Anglicism. It takes at least a year on the Continent to get the fog thoroughly out of one's skin; till when, we are only partially susceptible of natural enjoyments. The murmurs of Chipp against the shower of arrows directed against him, amused me beyond measure; by recalling the miseries of that factitious order of Life, both above and below being called Human.

But what did *not* amuse me, was to learn that Frank Walsingham continued to frequent Graham's and Crockford's, as much as before his marriage; and though Chippenham did not accuse him of neglecting his wife, as he would certainly have done had there been a pretext for the accusation, it was clear that no man, since the time of Sir Boyle Roche's bird, could be in two places at once. — Wo worth the woman, — *trebly* wo worth the wife, — who hath the queen of hearts for her rival!

I ventured to hint in my next letter to Frank that I had heard of his breach of promise both to poor Danby and myself; and to offer him a word or two of advice on the subject of the dice-box. But, alas!

Quæ res in se neque consilium, neque modum  
Habet ullum, cum consilio regere non potes.



## CHAPTER XII.

I fear I'm apt to grow too metaphysical,  
 The time is out of joint, — and so am I.  
 I quite forget this novel's merely quizzical,  
 And deviate into matters rather dry.  
 I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this I call  
 Much too fantastical. Men should know why  
 They write and for what end. But, note or text,  
 I never know the word that will come next.

BYRON.

Ἰδμεν ψευδὲς πολλὰ λεγὺν ἑνυμοῖσιν ὁμοίᾳ,  
 Ἰδμεν δ' αὖτ' ἀελλόμεν, ἀληθεῖα μυθεσασθαι.

HESIOD.

THE taste for a continental life is like a taste for olives. One begins with disgust. — The flavour goes against one. — But the zest imparted to the first glass of wine, induces a second trial; and we end by liking olives for themselves, and pretending to like them fifty times more than we do, as evidence of a well-bred predilection.

So is it with the English and Italy. I disliked it at first. Its simplicity of habits appeared to *me* deficiency of refinement. — By degrees, I began to discover a strange luxuriousness of flavour in the enjoyments to which those habits gave rise; and after a time, used to fancy, or at least to swear, that it would be utterly impossible for me ever again to breathe the breath of London. — To be sure I had every excuse for trying to believe myself; for Nunziata was so passionately fond of her country, and the Prince so true a patriot, that my affected Italianism was only a more delicate protestation of gratitude.

Just, however, as I was most earnest in my jests against the Mereworths about Britannia being web-footed, and London a smoke-divan, came a letter from Jane that determined me at once to visit England. Walsingham, it seems, had taken offence at my interference; and whereas fellows naturally so well-tempered as himself do not take offence at trifles with a friend, unless irritated in temper by the goadings of conscience, I saw that things were going wrong in Connaught Place.

Jane merely said in her letter words to the effect of, "Dear Cecil, you are my only father now. Do not sow discord between me and my husband. — I fear, however, that poor Frank has other things to vex him, besides your rebukes; for he is neither so well nor so happy as I could wish."

Thereupon, I placed my passport and credit with Torlonia in the hands of O'Brien, to make arrangements for our immediate departure for England, while I devoted the remnant of my time in Rome to taking leave of my friends.

I have dwelt so much, of late, on melancholy themes, that I will spare my Public the description of their grief at losing me. — The Princess was in despair; — and, if the truth must be told, her state of mind excited such melancholy forebodings in my mind, that I could not leave her, with any degree of comfort to myself, till I had persuaded Chippenham to stay and watch over her. — The Prince was too deeply absorbed by his studies and patriotic interests, to have much leisure for soothing the feelings of one so much younger and more sensitive than himself; and I felt that the sudden loss of my society must be too severe a deprivation, unless the vacancy in their little circle were supplied by a friend who would daily and hourly talk to her of Cecil.

The Mereworths, anxious to return to England, readily embraced my proposal that their son should join the party of the L\*\*is at Lucca for the bathing season; for Chippenham was not to be brought into Parliament till the following year, and they were anxious not to have him idling his time and squandering his happiness in London; more particularly now that his eccentricities had somewhat diminished his favour with the world. — I left him, therefore, to acquire *his* taste for olives — *i. e.*, the simple but exciting flavour of foreign life, — in Nunziata's society. I knew how they would think of me, together, — I knew how they would talk of me! — As the friend of her friend, she had always borne patiently with his peculiarities; and even if not the object of Cecil's sincere affection, a young man of taste and feeling, like Lord Chippenham, could not but rejoice at the distinction of intimacy with so sweet and accomplished a woman!

Throughout my journey homeward with the Mereworths, it was my consolation to reflect upon the advantage their son would derive from such companionship, and the certainty of being tenderly remembered at every moment of the day. — Certain flowers possess the faculty of standing in bloom longer than others. Through life, the friendships of which *I* have been the object, have proved more permanent than gaudier blossoms.

Eager to avoid the surmises of Walsingham that his conduct had in any degree influenced my return to England, I pretended, which was far enough from the truth, to be anxious touching the health of Lord Ormington and his unaccountable subjection to the authority of Herries. The Mereworths had assured me that the poor old man being now completely imbecile, it behoved me to look after my interests; unaware of my peculiar motives for delicacy in abstaining from all interference with his affairs; and I had consequently a fair plea with Frank for quitting Italy.

How I hate people to explain to *me* the motives of their actions! — True motives are invariably left for granted; motives which it is necessary to adduce, are pretty sure to be suppositious.

I arrived in town, however, at a season when explanations of all kinds are gratuitous; nobody being at leisure to listen. — Everybody was driving out, — dining out, — supping out. — Balls and the opera, — the opera and balls, — formed the order of the day; — parliament its pastime; — the time of year when the police, instead of throwing poisoned balls into the street to exterminate stray dogs, as they do in France, ought to extend the rigour of the law to loose coxcombs, for the decimation of our still more mischievous species.

My intentions of talking seriously to Frank seemed almost absurd. Who is to make himself heard in such a confusion of tongues? — Of what avail the still small voice of expostulation? — Whether to speak down a new tax, or talk down an old failing, one's eloquence must fall to the ground. — If ever I took it into my head to become the great Agitator of London, I would eschew the purple-and-fine-linen elocution of the Stanleys and Palmerstons.

—the huckaback eloquence of O'Connell, — the Ciceronics of Macaulay, or the Archbishop Laud-ations of the Bishop of ———: I would buy PUNCH, and be my own showman! — Pasquin and Marforio should be fools to me. I would brandish aloft my cap and bells, till they out-chimed those of St. Margaret's, and the Houses of Parliament had to lay down straw, as the Bishop of Lisieux did round his Cathedral that he might not hear the tolling in, as he had seen practised in Paris to deaden the rumble of the carriages. I would draw iron tears down Pluto Ernest's cheek, perforce of laughing: — and by my punmanship, force Heraclitus Earl of Mountcashel to write himself down an ass, for weeping over the crimes of a world containing such capital fun!

I swear I could often scarcely keep my countenance when I saw such *very* dull fellows as Herries and Co. posting down to Westminster to tell the reporters of the newspapers (for after all, it is to *them* the debates are addressed) what they knew better and could clothe in very much better language.

The Whigs were in again; — the Ides of April, — ominous month, — having been fatal to their opponents. Peel had been cheered out of office by the esteem of a House which venerated him as one of its best members, however cheap it may hold him as the leader of a party; and the Melbourne Ministry, ready to swallow camels without straining at gnats, shuffled back in its night-gown and slippers into Downing Street. — There was something amazingly gentlemanly in its picktooth free-and-easiness, as contrasted with the laborious striving against wind and tide of the country-gentleman administration, which, as regarded their rival surfaces, was as camlet to brocade.

The great comfort arising to myself from the restoration of the Whigs to office, was that Herries was wanted at Whitehall, leaving me free access to Hanover Square. Herries was invaluable among them as a man of business, — as knowing how to cross his t's officially, and generalize in the House with a certain squareness of deportment and sententiousness of diction, savouring somewhat of the retired schoolmaster, but affording a most efficient gag to the impertinent questions of a factious opposition. He

seemed born for the purpose of saying nothings that sounded like something.

My first object in town had been Hanover Square; less for anything it contained, than to obtain intelligence of the Walsinghams. — I soon saw, however, that Julia was not in her niece's confidence. To admit *her*, would have been to admit Herries, whom Jane as nearly disliked as her kindliness of nature permitted. It was therefore necessary I should see and judge for myself; and circumspectly and with deliberation.

It was quite apparent to me that Lord Ormington was far from in a state to retain the management of his affairs. On my sudden arrival, he even mistook me for poor Danby, — called me "his son, — his dear son risen from the dead!" — and I was more deeply touched than I ever thought to be by anything connected with Lord Ormington, when, in this mistaken idea, with trembling hands and faltering voice, he gave me his benediction!

By degrees we undeceived him; but he wept like a child at being undeceived. I saw he stood somewhat in awe of Julia, from the same unavowed prejudice as my own, of her being bone of Herries's bone, and flesh of his flesh; and when the rumble of the Ministerial chariot was heard on its return home to dinner, the day being Wednesday, I was shocked to perceive the sort of fluttered, school-girl manner in which the poor white-headed old man seemed to collect himself, to receive his authoritative son-in-law. There is nothing more distressing than the undue subjection of an old person to a young one — a bitter reversal of the order of nature.

In Connaught Place, my welcome was of a far more cordial nature; so cordial indeed, that for a moment, I trusted the world had outlied itself, and that Walsingham was not the half-reclaimed roué the whispers of White's asserted him to be. He received me with open arms; yet, a moment afterwards, checked himself, — as if at the impulse of some disagreeable reminiscence.

All my thoughts, however, were just then absorbed by Jane. To my taste, there is not a fairer object in nature than a very young mother; and the noble curly-pated little fellow who was never out of her arms, did not delight me

the less that most people pronounced him to be the image of his uncle Cecil. It is likely enough that the rest of them pronounced him to be the image of his uncle Rotherhithe! However,

Straight to my heart the fatal flattery went,

because nature, which was no flatterer, satisfied me that at least he was the image of his ill-fated uncle Arthur!

I could not help feeling, through my tears, as I gazed at dear Jane, how proud her poor father would have been to see her thus lovely, and thus perfected into womanhood. For now, at nineteen, Mrs. Walsingham was triumphantly beautiful; her form rounded into symmetry, and those varying blushes, the indication of girlish tremor, settled into the bloom of content!

And yet, on looking again and with more scrutiny, methought I could detect something of an unquiet expression in her eye. — She had begun to suspect, if not to know, there might be such a thing as sorrow in the world. — It would have been *my* pride had I ever married, and married the only thing worthy of placing in one's bosom in holy wedlock, extreme youth and extreme innocence, to make its life so fairy-like and so elysian, that at a certain age, it should have said, as a parody on young Turenne's "*qu'est ce que la Peur? — je ne l'ai jamais vu!*" — "What is grief? — I have never known it!" — At a certain age, the knowledge *must* come. — If a woman at forty do not betake herself to black crape and broad hems for the loss of her youth and beauty, she is either a great fool or the most sensible woman in the world.

It made one somewhat doleful, by the way, to come back and notice the changes effected by even two years absence in London and its society. People ask you with vain-glorious chuckling faces, whether you do not find the town prodigiously improved, — and what you think of the new this, — and the new that. — Is it not given you to surmise, worthy folks! that after a certain period of life, these symptoms of a brighter era to come than the one in which we shone our brightest, are highly dispiriting? — Hang the new Houses of Parliament, in which our grand nephews

are to legislate! — Hang wood-pavements, on which they are to roll along, as easy as these my pages! — Why could not such betterments adorn the days of my youth, — the days of my ambition, — the days of my vanity, — ere I had learned by experience, that

Φημι γὰρ τε καὶ μελετᾷ κουφὴ μετ' αἰρᾷ  
'Ρωμὰ μάλ', ἀργαλεὴ δὲ φέρειν —

So strong is this feeling in my soul, now that more than half a century has encroached upon my allotment of years, that the other day, as I was driving through Grosvenor Square, the sight of the mono-paned plate-glass windows in the houses of my friends Poltimore and Foley, having called up before my mind's eye an epoch to come when all the windows of Grosvenor and all other Squares will be similarly glazed, — the eyes of CÆCIL glazed in death, — I touched my horse on the flank, as I used twenty years ago when the beauty of the preceding night had been unkind; and darted off, as if to escape the desolating gloom of my peep into futurity. — I was a fool for my panes! But if there be "sermons in stones and books in the running brooks," — why not philosophy in plate-glass windows?

I *was* struck, I admit, by the terrible progress of metropolitan encroachment. — Nothing green within ten miles round Charing Cross, but the new cemeteries! — Even brickfields would have afforded a refreshing relief from the Prospect Places and Pleasant Rows, to which they had ceded their earth. Tyburn was taking a walk to Bayswater, through a series of squares; as her opposite neighbour Pimlico had done towards the King's Road, half a dozen years before; even the homely, humdrum, decent, rate-paying parish of Marybone had skulked out of town to hide its face in the fields!

One cannot compare the relative importance in modern times of the cities of London and Westminster, without a presentiment that no distant day will behold the creation of a West End Corporation and Guild, to balance the power of the Guild and Corporation of the East End; — and only pause a moment, my Public, to call up before

your mind's eye the *beau idéal* of a West End Lord Mayor!

The functionary at the Mansion House is usually a very comical fellow. — But reflect upon the incongruities of a Lord Mayor versed not only in his ps and qs, but in his vs and ws! — a Lord Mayor wearing his chain of office as coolly as though it were a guard chain, — nay, perhaps a *Chain-Peer*! — Conceive a Common-council, whose collective wisdom is culled from among the pale and par-boiled faces of Regent Street and Pall Mall! — Think of a court of shapely aldermen, in kid gloves, preferring the plaintive turtle to the lively! —

It is all very well to laugh; but jesting apart, posterity will expect something of this kind at our hands. If our Saxon ancestors providently watched over the interests of the city of London, we, Britons born, ought decidedly to consolidate the parishes we have called into existence by the influence of Aladdin's lamp into a municipal form. — Let us have our Guildhall in Belgrave Square, — our Mansion-house in Portman; — and if nobody has any particular objection, Benjamin Bond Cabbell, that very universal candidate for all sorts and conditions of offices, shall be the Hobler of the Occidental municipality. We won't call it the Vest End, the title being all too venial for our trusty and well-beloved Cockney; who will cling to the word Occidental as having an aural association with John Bull.

It will readily be supposed that on my quitting London for a two years' sojourn on the Continent, innumerable pretendants had presented themselves to become tenants of my snuggerie in St. James's Place, — a niche worthy of Saint Ego, to whom it was piously dedicated; and I had selected the person of Lord De Greyvin as worthiest to be my locum tenens. — It was more agreeable to me to think that my rooms were frequented by the same set of excellent fellows who had participated in my Cecilian Vespers, than that they should be given over to the custody of some snuffy old man in a Welsh wig, or middle-aged woman redolent of aniseed.

On arriving in town, however, I made it a grievance that the house should be let, and I driven to the Bachelor



Palace at Mivart's. — But after a visit to De Greyvin, a change came over the spirit of my waking thoughts. — I could not believe the niche occupied by *him*, to be the same wherefrom I smiled on the worship of my votaries! — It seemed to have grown small, stuffy, graceless, dull. — This could not altogether arise from one of the finest of our fine gentlemen having dozed in my fauteuil, or hoarded his billets-doux and billets de banque in my secrétaire. — It was that my desires of the eye had become more expansive in Italy, and my desires of the mind more refined. — I had learned to detest snug rooms and fusty curtains. After feasting my eyes day after day upon the living canvas of Titian and Giorgione, I could no longer abide prints of Taglioni after Chalon, or the simpering face of Pauline Duvernay. I wanted the long arcade, — the echoing gallery, — the mildewed marble, — the coved ceiling, — the lofty proportions characteristic of the clime where of old the gods came down to banquet with mankind, till a nobleness of soul was engendered in human bosoms; that rendered them fit companions for the gods.

Ω φιλτατη γη μητηρ, ως σεμνον σφοδρ η  
Τοις νουν εχουσι κτημα; —————

but thy domestic architecture is scarcely worthy of a beaver-dam! — A man in London lodgings is such a *very* little fellow. — A man in London lodgings becomes cognizant of chaldrons of coals, and barrels of small beer. — Oh! for my palazzo on the Arno, — oh! for my Genoese terrace! — Meanwhile, there was little or no fault to be found at Mivart's, — a caravanserai where everything is of the highest order, — even the bill.

But though exceedingly comfortable, according to more than the most approved principles of Great British comfort, I felt myself sadly lost in what affected people call the Great Metropolis. — It was not after the blue skies of Italy, — it was not after the majestic architecture or sweet companionship that rendered those colossal halls domestic as a linnet's nest, — that I was pining. So long as Danby lived, I felt that London contained a spot sacred as the

Sepulchre of Jerusalem to a Christian, or that of Mecca to a son of the Prophet. — Whatever wars or rumours of wars might betide, whatever frailties or follies of perplexities might disturb the tenour of my days, *there, even there* was my city of refuge; — *there* was rest, — *there* was peace! — The serenity of my brother's character, the firmness of his mind, the softness of his heart, united to render him the dearest counsellor that ever erring mortal had to lean on, amid the struggles of life. — And now—a blank! — Whenever I thought of Connaught Place, it was with a pang. — There was nothing *great* there now!

Walsingham was a bright-hearted, light-headed creature, incapable of anything like a consistent line of conduct. — He was not deficient in cleverness; but his talents were good only for show, — like the fire scattered in the sparks of a feu d'artifice, or the waters dispersed in the silvery shower of an ornamental fountain. — Had they ceased to sparkle, no human being would have been the worse for their loss. — It was no small comfort, by the way, to find that on the recent incompetency of the Tories to carry on the Government, and the inadequacy of the Whigs to succeed them with effect, both parties had spontaneously adverted to the loss of Danby, as the only man capable of accommodating the claims of the wisdom of our ancestors with the welfare of our posterity, so as not altogether to lose sight of electioneering pledges. — I could not but remember poor Lady Waldegrave's tender ejaculation to the memory of her defunct Earl, as recorded by Horace Walpole, — which almost reconciles one both to the husband and wife, though the former is answerable for the education of George III., and the latter for having flung away her lovely widowhood on a Duke of Gloucester!

But after all, this tribute of public esteem was no substitute for the mild eyes that looked forth divinely to welcome me when I wanted comfort; — or for the forcible mind which often relieved me from the most turbulent perplexities by a single word, as the waters of the Red Sea retreated from the uplifted finger of the Prophet.

As yet, I could obtain no satisfactory insight into the position of Walsingham. — I had reason to suspect he was in difficulties, — yet dared not inquire; — for till the

death of Lord Ormington, I had no control over the principal of my fortune so as to enable me to offer assistance. — Any appeal to the old lord in his behalf, moreover, would have been a bootless exposure; for to demand pecuniary assistance from *him* were to pick his pocket. — Lord Ormington was now incapable of the management of his affairs.

Meanwhile I had leisure to look around and note the progress of years, as one never notes it except on arriving from a far country. I said just now that the Tory Ministry had done nothing but create a Lord Abinger and a Whig Speaker. — I beg its pardon. — It had put an extinguisher on Sir Lucius and Lady Brettingham!

Emboldened, perhaps, by the triumphs of a long succession of years, her ladyship had trusted to the influence of her star, more than it was trustworthy; and ratted before the house, behind the arras of which she saw fit to ensconce herself, was properly insured. — The Whigs having declined before they quitted office to give a peerage to Sir Lucius, whose claims upon their gratitude were so peculiar that they could only have created him Lord Salmi de Bécasse, or Lord Petit-pâte aux huitres, Mariana had hastened to find a kindred soul in one of the new ministers. — But an administration which had thrown over one of its most popular adherents, because Cæsar's wife was not to be suspected, had still less patience with Cæsar's light-of-love. The better half of Downing Street sent her straight to Coventry: and between the animosities of the party she had deserted and the party by which she was rejected, Mariana underwent the fate of the hat, repelled both by beasts and birds.

This would have signified less, or rather perhaps this would not have occurred, but that the disreputable couple whose multitude of sins might have been covered by a crimson velvet mantle lined with ermine, were found to be a *leetle* out at elbows. The fortune so handsome for a squire, had proved unequal to gild the gorgeous balustrade of the state-staircase, up which they intended to ascend into the aristocracy; and their dinners were neither so frequent nor so good as heretofore.

The standers-by and sitters-by, began to smile. — Na-

pooleon after the field of Waterloo ceased to be Napoleon; and the Brettingshams, after being discharged by their French cook, ceased to be the Brettingshams. — Mariana fancied that a peerage would redeem all. — She was mistaken — it would only have made their defaulter more glaring — Bank notes are Power. — The only potential aristocracy of modern times issues its patents in promises to “pay to Mr. Matthew Marshall, or bearer, on demand.”

Fain would the unloving couple have fallen upon each other with mutual recriminations. But Mariana, retaining at least tact enough to follow the Buonapartean maxim *de laver son linge sale en famille*, talked about the advantage of foreign masters as a finish to the education of her children; and off they went to the Continent. — I crossed them at Dover; and never shall I forget their air of mutual *gêne* and reciprocal contempt. — What a *ménage* for a long journey! — In London, they had lost sight of each other. They were now face to face. — Like Adam and Eve when exiled from Paradise,

The world was all before them where to choose,

and lo! it was a world of thistles and brambles, — pain and sorrow. They were aware, too, that at the end of a few years, people would begin inquiring —

“By the way, — I wonder what became of those Brettingshams?”

A German play is said to close with an oath and an attitude. A chapter ought to close with a moral antithesis. As a contrast therefore to the defeat of the Brettingshams, enter “The Right Hon. Lord and Lady Harris, &c., &c., &c., &c., &c., &c.,” as they were announced that year in the catalogue of the exhibition of the Royal Academy, wherein they figured in a family piece, her ladyship in crimson velvet, point, and diamonds; — his lordship in full diplomatic uniform, the breast whereof was emblazoned with orders till it looked like a Herald’s tabard.

It was amazing the vulgar noise this happy couple contrived to make in the world, — the stormy noise of drums and fifes, not of sackbut, harp, or lute. — The triumphant

Marcia managed "to gild refined gold," and paint not "the lily," but the daffodil. — Having surrounded herself with the pæans of a dust-licking crew of parasites, there was not space around her to discover that the gems of the circle had dropped away. — It sufficed her to be escorted to her gaudy carriage by two of the tallest footmen with the longest aiguillettes, and the greatest allowance of be-coronetted buttons that ever bedizened plush and broad cloth. — She was the showiest lady of the aristocracy, — the poppy of the peerage,

*Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa  
Fortuna.*

Powers of compunction! — to think that I was ever within a million of billion of miles of elevating a person of such propensities into a Mrs. CECIL!

---

## CHAPTER XII.

Apris avoir chiffonné mes cheveux et rectifié le noend de ma cravate, je m'adossai à l'angle de la cheminie, dans une altitude qui, selon moi, ne denvit manquer ni de distinction, ni de caractère. J'attendis ainsi sous les armes, la femme en qui j'étais fort disposé à trouver la future souveraine de mon cœur. — BERNARD.

CERTAIN human frames resemble certain flowers, in which transplantation excites a second efflorescence. — Changes of climate had, on more occasions than one, produced in me a sort of moral rejuvenization; till, like a withered geranium removed from shade into sunshine, I became in October as green as April.

I had not been a fortnight in London, before I found myself budding anew. — People become immensely popular on their return after an inexplicable absence. I was a novelty of the season. Nobody had heard my best stories, — nobody knew my opinion of the new Pope and Bellini's last Opera: — and they wanted to learn what I thought of the Broglie administration, and Zumalacargui, and the poisoning of Prince Augustus of Portugal,

and the kingdomification of Greece, and the assassination of Quiroga, and a pack of other rubbish, concerning which I knew better than to trouble such brains as mine. — A head that is curled by Muddiman, ought not to derogate into thinking about things which Parliament is expressly constituted to think about in its stead.

I was not sorry, however, to be made a fuss with. One never *is*, — provided it be made by the right sort of people, in the right sort of place. I was glad to find White's so glad to see me; I was glad to find a pack of cards as thick as a whist-pack upon my table, after Mivart had been a few days in custody of my person.

The absurd thing was that I, who had found such fault with Chippenham for being bored by the loving-kindness tending towards the altar of St. George's Church, found my ire strangely excited by the pertinacity with which a dowager Miss or two, my contemporaries, such as Frederica Gray, renewed their pretensions to my hand. Frederica was wonderfully well-looking for her years; — but a girl who was old enough to be noticed for beauty at the coronation of George IV. could scarcely aspire in the year of grace eighteen hundred and thirty five, to the smiles of a man who had defied her in eighteen hundred and twenty.

And then, she pursued her manœuvres so unstratagetically. She *would* keep talking to me about the merry days when we were young; and as I knew full well how long ago they were for *me*, I could not suppose that time possessed an hour-glass of a different calibre for herself, — even had not a certain rosiness of nose recorded the autumnal nature of her charms. Besides, I was fully aware of the dozen flirtations per annum, in which she had indulged since her début, making in all two hundred and ninety four. She had extracted smiles from every young lord about town —

Floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant !

I longed to tell poor Fred that she was wasting her powder and shot, and had better look out for a respectable widower. There was Wolverton, — why could she not

be satisfied with Wolverton? Had I been matrimonially inclined, (which in the present flourishing condition of my spirits and appearance was I dare not say how far from the case!) a CÆCIL with only an infirm life of eighty-two betwixt him and forty thousand a year, need not have shown quite so much respect for grey hairs, as to seek a wife in Frederica Gray. To say that a man "wears well," is insulting enough; — but a waltzing young lady who wears well, materializes one's fancy with notions of caoutchouc clogs, and in lieu of gossamer, floating visions of Welsh flannel!

The fact is that my heart was now pretty nearly in the state of one of the metropolitan cemeteries; — in which, so many interments having taken place that there was no longer sufficient ground left to cover any new coffin, an Act of Parliament was passed the other day, making it unlawful to bury.

On that occasion, a notice was affixed to the walls and a huge padlock to the gates. But I was puzzled exactly in what form to certify to the Flowers of Loveliness that an Act had been passed for the better Regulation of the Flirtations of Cecil!

One day, as I sauntered into White's, — a rainy Sunday afternoon, when it is usually as full as the cemetery in question, — I heard predominating over the murmur of voices as I entered, the same name repeated in twenty different tones of indignation.

"Just like Lady Phœbe!" — said De Greyvin.

"Lady Phœbe may chance to get the worst of it!" — cried George Hartingfield

"Thank heaven, Lady Phœbe is not *my* sister!" — added Rotherhithe, settling his cravat.

The name was new to me. There had been no Lady Phœbe in the lists of fashion when I quitted England. One could no more mistake it than Lady Clementina, or Lady Wilhelmine, or any other specific designation of a well-known beauty. — My two years' absence affording an excuse for ignorance, I ventured the humiliation of inquiry; —

"Who is Lady Phœbe?" — said I, to my nearest neighbour.

Half a dozen of them looked round at me with wonder, as if they had thought *me* superior to so vulgar a thing as a mystification ; till at length Rotherhithe, whose

gentle dulness ever loved a joke,

answered that she was " the Lady Moon ! " a jest worthy so capital a moon-calf. — Mitchelston, however, who, having arrived in town as recently as myself, having just had his curiosity stimulated into the same interrogatory, informed me that Lady Phœbe's patronymic was Locksley, and that she was the daughter of Lord Ashby de la Zouche.

I shrugged my shoulders. " Nor I neither ; " — replied Mitchelston, wisely interpreting my gesture into " never heard of the man in my life ! "

And as if to save me the vexation of further questioning, he good-naturedly asked Joseph for the peerage, which being unlike Frederic Gray, in its *première jeunesse*, gave us to understand that the Earl of Ashby had recently succeeded to his title, on the death of his cousin, the Duke of Appleby, when the dukedom became extinct.

" Why it must be that old brute Sir Jacob Locksley ! " cried I, — with sudden enlightenment, — " brother to Sir Richard Locksley, who was our Ambassador at Vienna, — at Madrid, — Heaven knows where. "

" The man who used to bore the committee at the Travellers' by writing letters about red lead in the Cayenne pepper, and who was always called afterwards Cayenne Locksley ? — But was *he* married ? — Could any family man have leisure to make himself so officiously troublesome ? "

" I really can't say, — I was never at the trouble of considering Cayenne Locksley in any other light than a public nuisance. "

The Peerage again stood our friend. — It appeared that the Earl of Ashby had married Phœbe, the daughter of Stuart of Stuarthfield, who, having died two years afterwards, had left him a son and a daughter. I spare my Public the dates.

" Ay, ay, — no woman could stand such a man more



than two years!" was Mitchelston's commentary on the text. Instead of putting it down "died on the 15th of March," they ought to have inserted it "bored to death on the 15th of March."

"Why the daughter you see stands it. By this account, Lady Phœbe Locksley must be eighteen; 'and, Oh? the charming pride of beautiful eighteen!' " — muttered I, — between my teeth, like Sir Harry Wildair, — and no longer wondering at the ejaculations I had heard lavished upon the only daughter of Cayenne Locksley.

In the course of the next half hour, I fully gratified my curiosity. By assuring De Greyvin that I did not think Lady Phœbe the least handsome, I obtained a full, true and particular description of her beauty; and fought out the question of her eyes, till I ascertained that their colour was indescribable, — the sort of mottled, greenish, brownish, nondescript hue, which Mitchelston saucily compared to the cheek of a well sunned, ripe green gage.

"I wish to heaven, Lady Phœbe could hear you!" — cried Lord George Hartingfield, "it might do her good!"

"My dear fellow, I would plead my privilege of matrimony for being a brute," replied Mitchelston laughing.

"I suspect she cares very little what is said or thought about her, by any one of us, married or single," added Rotherhithe.

"Any one of us?" — reiterated De Greyvin, — eyeing the Viscount askance with an air of utter disgust, repudiating all idea of such fellowship.

"Let her be as scornful as she chooses!" rejoined George Hartingfield; — "she has now the vogue of fashion in her favour, and like the king can do no wrong. But wait a year or two, and you will see! — A woman cannot go on playing fast and loose for ever. Her father has set his heart upon making her a duchess; and if neither Devereux nor Clarensfield will have her —"

"Come, come, come, George!" interrupted De Greyvin — "it is not fair of you, because Lady Phœbe was not to be tempted by a good-looking younger brother, to talk about people refusing *her*. I never saw her encourage either Clarensfield or Devereux more than you or I. — I suppose no girl ever attracted such universal admiration,

— not here alone, — but at Vienna, where half a dozen fellows went half out of their minds for her. Since she has been in London, one has heard of nothing else. Yet I defy any man to say that she ever said a civil thing in reply to his attentions. — Lady Phœbe is as proud as she is pretty. — I don't believe she thinks the world contains anything good enough to be even trampled upon by her pretty little foot !”

“ Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this ?”

was my inward meditation upon De Greyvin's complaints, — Why *this* was the very woman for me ! — *This* must be my predestined partner, — the rib taken from the side of Cecil while he was asleep ! — Young, beautiful, high-born, scornful ! — What could a man want more, over whom rank and fortune were closely impending ? — For it was useless to deny it to myself ; if ever again I submitted to the ignominy of falling in love, it would be with a Lady Ormington, not with a Mrs. Cecil. — I have never admitted it to my readers ; but there were moments when that Mary-infatuation, though known only to myself and O'Brien, brought such a blush of shame to my cheek that, had I been a royal personage with a court physician always dawdling about me, to invest me with prospective diseases, he would have ordered me bled on suspicion of approaching apoplexy.

And now that I have begun to be candid on the subject, I may as well tell the whole truth and have done with it ! — On the day I visited the Exhibition, just as I stood lost in stupefaction before the full-blown “ Portraits of the Right Honourable Lord and Lady Harris, &c., &c., &c., &c.,” my small patrician ear was vexed by a sort of whispering, giggling, exclamation beside me of “ No, it *can't* be, — yes, it *is* — I declare I could almost have sworn it was — Mister Cecil Danby !” — (Ye gods ! — a *Mister* CECIL !)

The individual from whom these singularly familiar observations proceeded, proved to be a comely little woman, round as an ortolan, leaning on the arm of a beetle-browed florid man in black, who stood in his clothes as awkwardly as Robinson Crusoe may have done when, after leaving

off goat's skins, he became suddenly restored to the broad cloth of civilized life. What a bul-bul for my pale white rose! — What a husband for Mary! — For it was herself. — She had married her father's curate. She was already the mother of a chubby boy. They were come up to London to see the lions and buy furniture, and were going about three in a gig! —

Sic risum Veneri ; cui placet impares  
Formas atque animos subjuga ahenea  
Sævo mettere cum joco !

There is no occasion to give the narrative of the poor little woman's happiness in her own words ; — a happiness of the boiled-mutton-and-turnips order, which, like Rogers's village spire, " points the way to Heaven ! " — She spoke of the hard life she had led with the Crutchleys, only as an enhancement to her present unexampled connubial felicity ; and introduced her dear Robert to me, and hinted how much she should like to show me the baby, who was cutting its first tooth !

I took down her name and address. The time was approaching when I should have considerable church preferment at my disposal. — Ahem !

It was perhaps the disgust arising from this climax of my pastoral adventure, that put me into such wonderful conceit with aristocratic beauty. — From that day, my taste had been arrayed in a birth-day suit ; — my heart was all ruffles and brocade.

After all, there is something exceedingly absurd, exceedingly unphilosophical, in a man dropping out of his sphere of society on such slender temptations. Where else can he be so intrinsically understood and appreciated ? — In an inferior orbit, the accessories of his position in life supersede the influence of his personal merits. — On such a girl as Mary, my kid gloves and waistcoat had probably produced a stronger impression than my teeth or conversation. — My conversation she scarcely understood ; and she had seen teeth nearly as fine in the mouths of Thompsons and Johnsons. — Even with such people as the Winstanleys, my Honourable Cecil Danbyism went for something, or they would not have given their hand to an Earl of Wolverton.

But a Lady Phœbe Locksley, — daughter of the Earl of Ashby, and niece of the Ambassador at Vienna, if she liked me at all, must like me for my Self. — And oh ! how passing pleasant a thing it is for one's Self to be liked on such security !

That day, being, as I said before, a rainy Sunday, and a rainy Sunday in London being a thing that even the gloomy imagination of Dante never evoked from the mysteries of Darkness, — I dined with a bachelor party in Dover Street; realizing pretty much what may have constituted the *roué* suppers of the Régence, and comprehending most of the pleasantest fellows about town. — Nothing under thirty, — none of the odious boys who had spindled up into notice during my absence : — but

Men of the world who knew the world like men,

and who, by their unanimous encomiums on Lady Phœbe, stimulated my interest concerning her, almost into distraction. — Though far from guarded in the tone of their comments on the other beauties of the season, and though unanimous in praise of *her* loveliness as fairest of them all, not one of them presumed to give utterance to the libertine expressions which trailed the snail-track of their admiration over all other roses of the parterre of fashion.

I began to get frantically anxious for a sight of this divine creature. Wherever I went, I heard of nothing but Lady Phœbe. — Lady Phœbe had the smallest hand, — the smallest foot, — the smallest waist, — the largest eyes, — the whitest teeth, — the blackest eyebrows. — Lady Phœbe was everything in the superlative ! — One of the superlatives, however, might have been dispensed with. — Every one agreed that she had the greatest bore of a father extant ; — that she was watched over as no golden or forbidden fruit had been since the days of the Hesperides ; — and that no sooner did Lord Ashby smell the blood of a younger brother among her *adorateurs*, than he became ferocious as an ogre, and resumed all the irritability of Cayenne Locksley.

It happened that on the Tuesday following, I was to dine with old Walsingham, Frank's father ; who, I sup-

pose, thought me worth conciliating as the future head of his daughter-in-law's family ; — and I discovered in the interim, from Rotherhithe, that Lord Ashby and his daughter were to be of the party. He gave me to understand, indeed, that they were to be his father's guests out of compliment to *his* pretensions to the hand of Lady Phœbe. — But the truth was, that Old Walsingham and Cayenne Locksley were birds of a feather, who had chirruped together through life at Arthur's. — People say of very discordant persons that they have not an idea in common. — The two Earls had just one idea in common ; — that of taking care of number one, — and aggrandizing number two, — (their family,) at the expense of their family's happiness.

I felt somewhat nervous when preparing for the said dinner. I came home from my ride half an hour earlier than usual. This little girl of eighteen appeared to have notions of her own concerning personal appearance, or she would not have been fastidious touching De Greyvin, — the best looking fellow in London. — I flatter myself there is a certain *tournure* about some men, against which five-and-twenty, in all its smoothness of skin and capillary exuberance, has very little chance ; and am quite certain that it existed among the men of *my* time, to a degree of which none of the lads of Crockford's approach the outskirts. — The Seymours, for instance ! — What family of the present day, albeit of royal descent, can compare in distinction of appearance with Mrs. Damer and her brothers, at the period when the Duchess of Ilfracomb was Marchioness of Devereux, and Lord Harris an adventurer ? — At an earlier epoch, the old set of Devonshire House ! — When shall we ever look upon their like again ? — In gradual decadence from the days of hoops and bagwigs to those of tartan shawls and pilot coats, we have now brought down our simplicity so nearly to a level with the pavement, that there will soon be no fine gentlemen left in London, except the footmen of Lady Ailesbury.

I entered Lord Walsingham's old-fashioned house in Arlington Street in a flutter of spirits to which my experience, I will not say years, ought to have risen superior. — My coat was by Cooke, — my guard-chain by Kiltch-

ing, — my Mercurial step by what Dogberry would call the gift of providence. — My linen, — (the Earl Marshal's office troubles itself with one's "fringed or plain linen," — and why should not I?) was exceedingly plain, — plain as the Right Honourable Lady Harris, &c., &c., &c., &c., and fine as her Right Honourable Lord. — Fine linen is a sin to which I plead heinously guilty. Had it been the *only* crime of Dives, — I should feel myself to be in a bad case.

I came late. I wished my entrée to make a certain effect. But whether it did so or not, was comparatively unimportant; for the only female face in the room was that of the Duchess of Ilfracomb, who was there with her Duke and her young Marquis of Devereux; and a macaw-faced Dowager-Countess of Clackmannan, the formal sister of the host. This was a bore; for it was clear that Lady Phœbe, if she *did* arrive, must be taken into dinner by Devereux.

"Lord Ashby is late!" — mumbled the Earl, after we had waited ten minutes longer and found more fault with the weather than anything but that *souffre douleur* of English spleen, the weather, could bear with patience.

"And such a martinet as he used to be for punctuality!" — croaked Lady Clackmannan, shaking her head. — "Ah! poor man, — he has begun to find out what it is to have a fashionable daughter!"

And again Rotherhithe, Devereux, and Lord Arthur Cornwallis betook themselves to the glass;" — not what the Captain Morris school calls "the cheerful glass;" — but the doleful "Glass," to whose rising English gentlemen devote their attention six months in the year for the sake of their shooting; and to whose falling the other six, for the sake of their hunting. — It happened that there had been a dreadful thunderstorm in Cambridgeshire the preceding day, which was said to have destroyed many thousand pounds worth of property; and though London is in general too well bred to trouble itself about the disasters of its country cousins, as on the present occasion Newmarket had suffered, it was permissible to enquire whether the panes of Lord J. or the Duke of C. had been in jeopardy.

At that moment the folding doors were flung open, and as described in the motto of the present chapter, I drew up, and prepared for action.

Qui amant ipsi sibi omnia fingunt,

*Lord Ashby* ALONE!

Lady Phœbe was indisposed. "Lady Phœbe had flattered herself till the last minute of being well enough to have the honour of waiting on Lord Walsingham; but to her great regret was forced to relinquish the promised pleasure."

I could see by two scarlet spots on the cheek-bones of the Earl, that this was angrily, not sorrowfully, narrated. — It was clear to me that for *could* not come, we were privileged to read *would* not. — Everybody expressed becoming sympathy. But the Duke and Duchess, Lord Walsingham and Lady Clackmannan, and even Lord Arthur Cornwallis, made little effort to conceal their satisfaction that we had not much longer to wait for dinner.

Whether it came sooner or later, it was *fiasco* to me! — One does not go to such places as Walsingham House, to eat. — The viands are sure to be as unctuous as the guests are dry, — the wines as much too hot, as the conversation too cold. — I got through it, however; talked to the Duchess, on whose dexter hand I sat at dinner, about Italy, — a topic on which she emitted less nonsense than is usually the case with English people: — and on pretence of the new opera, got away from dessert the moment the ice had gone its rounds. — One thing at least was satisfactory: — if Lady Phœbe Locksley did not consider Cecil Danby worth coming to see, she was at least uninfected by her father's passion for strawberry leaves. — Devereux was as much slighted as myself.

The chief point, however, on which I congratulated myself when stepping into my cab to go to the opera, was that I had renewed my acquaintance with old Ashby; and I had been careful to inform him in reply, to his inquiries after "my excellent father," — that "Lord Ormington was completely broken up, and in a very precarious way."

My civilities to the Duchess meanwhile, had not fallen on sterile ground :—next day, came a dinner card. I had half a mind to refuse ; for the Ilfracombs were dull sort of people, living in a set with which I had little sympathy ; but in the sequel, I had reason to congratulate myself on having relented in their favour. — Though I went early, in deference to the age of the Duke, not only was his grace's brother, the Archbishop, already arrived, but beside him on the sofa sat a striking-looking girl in a simple muslin dress without ornaments, — nothing to adorn her but the finest hair, with the exception of poor Jane Walsingham's, I ever beheld, — conversing with him with all the ease and good breeding but without a moment losing sight of the respect due to one of the most venerable father's of the Church, — whom the presence of Lord Ashby discoursing fustian with the Duchess, sufficiently explained to be Lady Phœbe.

I fully expected that, when presented to her, she would look the other way, as affecting carelessness and indifference, — according to the habit of young ladies when flattered and fluttered by making a highly desirable acquaintance. — Instead of which she gazed stedfastly in my face, and told me she had long wished for the pleasure of knowing me, as coolly as if I had been my own grandmother !

As there was no other lady, the Duke had of course the honour of her arm to dinner, and Devereux equally, of course, supported her on the other side. But the party being small, we had a sociable round table ; and as the conversation became general, and I was seated within three of her, she began questioning me respecting two or three Milanese families whom she had known at Vienna, and seemed instinctively aware I had also known at Lucca. — There was not a moment's cessation of chat between us.

Lord Ashby, between a Duchess and an Archbishop, — like his own coat of arms supported by a Monk and an Angel, — was too much engrossed to interfere. — But the scarlet patches on the cheek-bones re-appeared again ; especially when he saw young Devereux obliged to get up a conversation aside with the Duke upon the Municipal Bill,



— concerning which both of them had probably heard enough the night before, in the Houses of Gee-up, and Wo-ho.

After dinner, Lady Phœbe's courtesies were still more unequivocal. She was evidently amazingly struck with me. — It was Saturday night; and she was careful to tell me she was always at the opera with her aunt Lady Stuart of Stuartsfield, and that their box was on the first pair. — I *hope* it was because she fancied me near-sighted, that she thought it necessary to afford me such minute intelligence!

---

## CHAPTER XIV.

Pour veiner de son front la pâleur délicate,  
 Le Japon a donné son plus limpide azur :  
 La blanche porcelaine est d'un blanc bien moins par  
 Que son col transparent et ses tempes d'agate.  
 Dans sa prunelle humide un doux rayon éclate, —  
 Le chant du rossignol près de sa voix est dur,  
 Et quand elle se lève, à notre ciel obscur,  
 On dirait la hunc en sa robe d'onate.  
 Ses yeux d'argent bruni roulent moelleusement,  
 Le caprice a taillé son petit nez charmant,  
 Sa bouche a des rougeurs de pêche et de framboise;  
 Ses mouvemens sont pleins d'une grâce Chinoise;  
 Et près d'elle, on respire autour de sa beauté  
 Quelque chose de doux, comme l'odeur de thè.

THÉOPHILE.

A MAN must have been unreasonable indeed in his expectations, to feel disappointed in Lady Phœbe Locksley! — To a symmetry of form and feature which the dreams of Lysippus never surpassed, she united a grace of movement, that would have been coquetry had it not been the gift of nature. — With the rash liveliness and *abandon* of a child, she combined an almost matronly tone of conversation arising from much travel rather than from great cultivation of mind.

There was something absolutely startling in her decision

of tone, — a decision that did not however a moment put in peril her elegance of feminine gentleness. She was literally adorable — a thing to put in a shrine, and fall down before, and worship!

I will not swear that what O'Brien found me writing that night, when he brought in my hot water, (and which, but for the inequality of the lines he might have mistaken for a letter to my banker, or Mr. Scriven Screwham,) did not bear some reference to the shape of light which had glanced athwart my path, — I had every excuse. — Lady Phoebe was a creature to have made a poet of Joseph Hume!

Not that my nature is lyrically addicted. Sonnets and *gentil-Bernard-isms* in the style of my motto, I leave to our young Viscounts, a *corps d'élite* called the Countess of Blessington's Voltigeurs, who get amazing credit at Almacks by rhyming for the Annuals. But I have no objection to a good, strong, honest verse, warm out of the depths of the heart, and sweet as the fragrance of a bean-field; which, like those of Burns, finds its echo in every memory, from palace to hovel; — embalming the simplest thoughts and feelings for immortality, as the spikenard and rich gums of Egypt have preserved for thousands of centuries some humble bird or insect of the pastures of the Nile, sacred and secure amid the mummied reliques of high-priests and kings.

But I reverence the gift of song, rather as the comfort of the poor than the luxury of the rich; — a divine vouchsafement, like the flower in the fields or thrush in the thicket; — to solace the ear and eye of those who toil through life with moistened brows and callous hands, as hewers of wood, or drawers of water, and the only indication that reaches them of fairer and brighter things; — something to beguile the weariness of the spinning wheel, — the restlessness of the cradled child, — the labour of the husbandman at his plough, — of the mines at his squalid task, — of the soldier plodding with blistered foot upon a foreign soil. — I have stood among the vineyards in France and listened to a chorus of peasant voices chaunting the stirring measures of Béranger; — I have stood by Tweedside listening to the song of the reapers,

till I forgot to despise the vocation of "these same metre ballad-mongers."

I do not pretend to be a Burns, — I do not pretend to be a Béranger, — I do not pretend to be a Poet! — If people want poets, there are Baillie Cochrane, and Johnny Manners, Lords Powerscourt, Jocelyn, Gardner, and the Houses of Lords and Commons know how many more men of wit and pleasure about town. All I pretend, is to turn a rhyme when wanted for a white morocco album, super-gilt, lined with blue tabby, and locked with a golden key studded with turquoises, such as one finds in the choice boudoirs of May Fair. I have no doubt Lady Phœbe Locksley had a dozen such volumes; and it was probably in the hope of getting them inscribed therein, in the most delicately illegible of hands upon the most satin of papers, that I strung together the following Della Cruscan

#### STANZAS.

I dreamt one day a waking dream,  
Brighter than Slumber's are,  
Of wandering where the planets gleam,  
Like an unsphered star;  
Round a Chimera's yielding neck  
With grasping hands I clung;  
No need of spur, — no fear of check, —  
Those fields of air among.

It had a woman's lovely face,  
It had an angel's wings, —  
And as we pierc'd the realms of space  
Breath'd gentlest whisperings;  
So breathes the hovering Morning Hour  
Amid the lonely hills,  
To waken fragrance in the flower,  
The ripple on the rills.

Oh! dare I but retrace the words  
It seemed to syllable,  
A golden lyre's melodious chords  
Were discord to the spell; —  
Borne on with rushing wings, perverse,  
We dar'd the opposing sky;  
Alone, amid the universe,  
My dauntless steed and I. —

That strange Chimera, wild of wing,  
 Though fair of face and form, —  
 Soft as the genial breath of spring,  
 Bold as the mountain storm;  
 Dearest! — its name, its origin,  
 Oh! canst thou not divine? —  
 It was — forgive, forgive, the sin, —  
 The thought that thou wert mine!

I was roused from my dactyls and spondees, by a knock at the door, — my own door I mean, — for that of Mivart is like a royal charter, inviolable; — when lo! a scared and pallid waiter, who told me he could not find O'Brien, — (I wonder where the caitiff was hiding himself?) and that a person had brought a note requiring an immediate answer.

Notes that require the disagreeable immediate answer called ready money, do not present themselves at two o'clock in the morning. Requesting permission therefore of my Muse, I opened the peremptory despatch, and prepared to read. Who knows? — Perhaps Lord Ormington might be gathered to his fathers! — Perhaps I might be unconsciously reigning in his stead!

It was from Jane! — "Dearest Cecil," wrote my poor niece, — "I beseech you go to Crockford's and bring home Walsingham. — He has been losing lately more than we can well afford; and I have remonstrated and intreated in vain. — I would not, however, encroach upon your kindness, were my anxiety solely of a pecuniary nature. But my boy is ill. I am more alarmed than I can say. I intreat you, if you cannot prevail upon my husband to accompany you to Connaught Place, come yourself!"

In a moment I had thrown off my dressing-gown and equipped myself anew. So powerful had been the influence of Lady Phoebe over my feelings, that I had not looked in at Crockford's, as usual, after the opera. I now jumped into a hackney coach, without making a single wry face, and proceeded to St. James's Street.

I had long perceived that, in gaining a nephew in Frank Walsingham, I had lost a friend. — There is a natural antagonism between every human being and those that are in authority over him, which it requires some strength

of mind to surmount. As Jane's trustee, Frank regarded me much as aforetime *I* used to regard old Votefilch; and I consequently felt a certain degree of reluctance in ever approaching the table where I knew him to be engaged.

The present occasion, however, admitted of no delicacy; and the moment I entered the room, I saw by his burning eyes and compressed lips, that he was playing high, and playing the fool. — Advancing as carelessly as I could, and invited him to come and smoke a cigar with me on the steps. — He refused, — civilly enough; and I then entreated him to let me drive him home. I had not courage to mention the name of Jane or the boy, at such a time, in such a place!

Again he refused. But as I now found that he was playing a ruinous stake, I whispered, in the name of his wife, a still more fervent request that he would come away. I shall not repeat his reply. Had I been extinguishable on the spot, like the bee of the poor Hamadryad, he would not have scrupled to crush me under his sandal. Poor Danby! The tears which, in his brokenness of heart, he had let fall upon the Story of Rhæcus recurred piteously to my mind.

As it seemed impossible, without making a scene, to bring away Walsingham, I wrote him a note, mentioning the illness of his child, and leaving it to the waiter to deliver, hastened to Connaught Place.

Jane uttered not a word of complaint when she saw me appear unaccompanied by her husband. She seemed to have expected as much; — these vigils were evidently no unusual thing. Her whole attention was fixed on the little fellow who lay in her lap, — more lovely than ever through the effect of the fever that coloured his cheeks and sparkled in his large blue eyes. Startled by my voice, he fancied it was his father come home, and smiled in my face; and his countenance thus brightened, he looked so like poor Frank in his better days, — Frank, careless and unconscience-struck, — that the tears came into my eyes as I met those of the neglected mother.

I told her Frank was coming — (I could not doubt that, after the appeal I had hazarded, he would make his appearance,) and advised with her meanwhile touching the

boy. He did not seem to *me* to be seriously affected. It was probably only one of the feverish disorders of infancy ; — though the nurse kept fussing in and out with ill-omened words of “ convulsions,” — “ measles,” — “ scarlet fever,” — “ small pox,” — as though she were reciting the index of Buchan’s Domestic Medicine.

Jane was at all events tranquillized by having a better counsellor than this foolish woman, to remind her that, so lately as midnight, the apothecary had assured her there was no danger, but that she must prepare for a restless night.

Thus exhorted, she tried to be wise ; and as she sat there in her night-dress, her rich hair twisted simply round her head, her face sad with sorrow, and the shaded light on a distant table falling partially on her sleeve and the child gathered into her lap, I was struck by her resemblance to that most graceful of women and motherly of Madonnas, Correggio’s Zingana. The attitude of the infant, with its foot resting in her hand, and its own little hand clinging to her slender finger, was identically the same. Oh ! tender Mother-Love ! — what can be holier, for even a divine illustration, than thy instinctive tenderness !

While I was still soothing her, interrupted now and then by that sharp shrill cry expressing the peevishness of infantine pain, there came a hurried knock, a rushing step upon the stairs ; and I fancied that the door was about to be flung open, and the impetuous Frank to throw himself on his knees at the feet of his wife. But I heard him pause suddenly as he approached the chamber of sickness. His hand was upon the door-handle full a minute before he took courage to enter ; and when he *did* appear, he was as pale as death, but might have been pronounced calm and unconcerned by an observer who gave no heed to his impeded respiration and quivering lips.

“ There is not much the matter with him, I fancy ? ” said he, addressing himself in a hoarse voice interrogatively to me, while laying a cold and tremulous hand on the shoulder of his wife ; and he was right not to question *her*, for by the big tears dropping on the white wrapper

of her darling boy, I saw that she would have been incapable of reply.

"Not much," I replied; "but his mother is anxious, Frank, — which was the reason I persisted just now."

"You did very right," rejoined Frank, in a still hoarser voice; and a moment afterwards, he raised his hand from his wife's shoulder, and extended it to mine, as if in mute apology for the coarseness with which he had resented my interference.

I accept it, of course. I loved Frank Walsingham for his own sake, as well as his wife's. It was, in fact, only by unkindness towards *her*, that it would have been possible for him to estrange my friendship.—I soon left them:—

What business had I there at such a time?

I was not sorry, however, (when the morrow proved, as I expected, that the disorder of the child was a casualty of no moment,) that a scene should have occurred entitling me to enter freely with Walsingham into the chapter of his excesses. — Though delicate about attacking him at Crockford's, or blaming him in the presence of his wife, I made no scruple to lay before him in a candid and manly manner, the infraction of his engagements both with me and her poor father, by this recurrence to the gaming table.

"I knew it all!" — said he. "You can say nothing to me in the way of reprehension, that I do not merit, and will not bear with submission. — I have behaved like a rascal, Cecil! — most men end with doing so, who begin with Hazard. — I am mad, — desperate! — I dare not even promise you to abstain for the future; for circumstanced as I am, were I suddenly to refrain, suspicion would be excited, and claims made upon me which I am in no position to satisfy — I am involved to a degree I scarcely dare contemplate!"

The not daring to contemplate such matters, being, I was well aware, one of their most fatal features, I insisted with kindness but firmness, — the kindness of a friend, the firmness of an uncle, — upon a strict examination and enumeration of his play debts and general involvements.

Almost as much to his amazement as mine, they amounted to no less a sum than £5,500! — and with an income of £2,300 a year! — To let their house in Connaught Place, as he proposed, and retire to the country and retrenchment, though a sure was so slow a process of enfranchisement, and the exposure attendant on such a measure must be so painful to Jane, that though I affected to approve, I resolved to look round me in search of other expedients.

My own capabilities in pecuniary matters were nearly as limited as those of Frank. — But there was Lord Ormington, rolling in riches, the savings of his forty thousand a year; what better could be done with his wealth than appropriate a portion of it to his grand-daughter, — sole representative of the son he had so dearly loved! — Such an arrangement, however, would be difficult to accomplish. He was in a state of all but idiotcy; and Herries had neither the power nor the will to direct his fortune to any other purposes than the common exigencies of housekeeping.

I had not spoken ten words to the poor imbecile old man since my arrival in town; nevertheless, I resolved to hazard an attempt in favour of the Walsinghams. It was clear from the nature of certain of the claims upon Frank, that, unless promptly discharged, he would be arrested, and an execution put into his house. There was consequently no time to be lost. It was perhaps possible to awaken the recollection of Lord Ormington. The affections possess a mysterious hold over the intellects; and a strong representation of the evils impending over Jane, might perhaps produce a shock causing the electric chain to vibrate. At all events, the attempt could do no harm.

I presented myself accordingly in Hanover Square. Lord Ormington inhabited that hateful back-drawing room to which I have before adverted, as the scene of my mother's dying hours; and I can scarcely describe the reluctance with which I found myself once more on the threshold. — I had not even enquired for Julia. — I did not wish to involve *her* in an affair which it was desirable to keep from the knowledge of her husband, who was on unfriendly terms with Walsingham.



The servant naturally announced me as "Mr. Danby!" — and that now unfamiliar name so startled the ear and roused the sensibilities of poor Lord Ormington, that, as on occasion of my former visit, he tottered forward and threw himself into my arms.

Decrepit, feeble, his long white hair hanging loosely on his shrunken temples, his withered face furrowed not by years alone but by a weary series of domestic sorrows, now possessed a venerable air, redeeming it from all its former triviality. Though the expression of those glazed blue eyes was cold and vacant, it was impossible to divest oneself of a certain feeling of deference towards his helpless old age.

I sat down beside him on his low sofa, and saw by the tenderness with which his palsied hand still clutched at the sleeve of my coat, that I had not dissuaded him from mistaking me for his more dearly beloved son. — It was painful to me to rectify an error that made him so happy. I resolved to say no more about it. The misconception might be in our favour.

Previous to risking my appeal, a disagreeable obstacle was to be removed. — Coulson, aged as his master, but unimpaired in faculties, was his constant companion; and though the servant who officiated as attendant on both, had discreetly retired upon my entrance, the privileged abomination resolutely kept his seat; nay, rigidly kept his eye fixed upon my movements, as the hunter upon those of a beast of prey.

There was no standing this. — The crisis was such as to obviate all scruples. I therefore coolly but peremptorily desired to be left alone with his lordship. It was the first time I had ever assumed an air of authority in Coulson's presence: — and, at that moment, he probably beheld in me the future Lord Ormington; for rising from his seat with a sullen scowl, he hobbled out of the room.

I was now alone with the old man. I might as well have been alone with a corpse, — as once before in that hated room, — for any purposes of vitality that remained in my companion. But I adhered to my resolution. Though shuddering at the idea of the imposture to which I had recourse, I spoke of poor Jane as my daughter —

(and was she *not* so by love and adoption ?) — adverted to her household distresses, and assured him that nothing short of a gratuity of six thousand pounds could restore her to credit and comfort.

At first, he listened as though not a syllable I was uttering penetrated the confusion of his brain. But when I persevered, — when I spoke of her as my child, — my dear child, — suffering, — disgraced, — houseless, — spoke of her with tearful eyes and faltering voice, as the father would have done who stood by my bedside at Genoa, — he began, as if by sympathy, to tremble and weep ; and to do him justice, from the moment he was made to comprehend that a pecuniary sacrifice was demanded of him, did not hesitate.

He called for pens, ink, paper : — seating himself at the table to write in such utter bewilderment of mind, that it was only too painfully clear, I was committing an act of robbery. But robbery of whom ? — *Myself* ! — I was his *inevitable* heir. A few hours, and I might come into possession of the princely fortune of which, for the use of others, I was subtracting a part.

The great difficulty, now, was to limit the extent of his munificence. How much was wanted ? — For what amount should the order upon his banker be made out ? — If six thousand pounds were required, would not ten, would not twenty be better ? — He had seventy or eighty thousand pounds, he said, lying idle at Rothschild's ! — I had only to name my sum.

I named *ten* thousand, — regarding the money as more than half my own ; and resolving to invest the surplus in the hands of the Walsingham's banker, for the separate use of Jane. — With so wild a husband, I could not but foresee a period when such a resource might be of vital importance. — Unluckily, the order was made out in my favour as “ pay to Mr. Danby or order.”

Having completed my purpose, and conscious of the joy it was about to convey to the Walsinghams, by restoring peace of mind to Jane and solacing the remorse of Frank, I could almost have kissed the withered hand by whose concession the miracle had been accomplished. — Little had I imagined that any series of words traced by

Lord Ormington would ever bring tears of gratitude into my eyes. — I thanked him heartily. — I am afraid that, in order to soothe his ear by the word it thirsted for, I even, for once in my life, called him by the hallowed name of "FATHER!"

Having summoned back Coulson and the servant, the former of whom I saw cast a mistrustful glance at the standish and open blotting book on the table, I hurried away, in order to get the order cashed before the closing of the banking-house. In the hall, I met with Herries. He seemed anxious and out of breath; and it was much earlier than his usual time for returning home. I afterwards ascertained that he had been expressly sent for from his office, by the officious old Coulson, with an intimation that Mr. Danby — no, not Mr. Danby, — CECIL, — the enemy, — had insisted upon a private interview with the invalid —

‘ΟΥΤΟΣ ΕΣΤΙ ΓΑΛΛΩΤΗΣ ΓΥΡΩΝ.

But the deed was done!

Painful and humiliating as were these scenes to my feelings, I can attest that all was fully compensated by the dinner I enjoyed that day in Connaught Place. Six months of delinquency and full three of remorse, on the part of Walsingham, had so undermined their domestic happiness, and care had already hollowed such an abyss under their feet, that it was as a renewal of youth and love and joy, to feel themselves suddenly secured from evil, and restored to their place in society.

After dinner, the boy was brought for a moment, and placed in his mother's arms. How my heart thrilled under the look of Frank, when after fixing his tearful eyes a moment upon the child and mother, they sought my own!

I did not return the following day to Hanover Square, though gratitude to Lord Ormington almost tempted me. But I felt somewhat conscience-struck. I had transgressed a commandment. — I had done evil that good might come; — and had not courage to walk as a delinquent into the house of such a Pharisee as the Right Hon. Halbert Her-

ries, M.P., President of the Board of ———, and half the moral-mending societies of this sinful metropolis.

It was more agreeable to stay at home and indite verses to Lady Phœbe's arched eyebrow; and fifty times more agreeable to go and meet her, as I did, daily in the ride, or nightly in the ball rooms or at the opera. — The spectacle of the happiness in Connaught Place seemed to have infused Spring into my soul. — I was not more than five-and-twenty; — no! — (smile, Public, if you will,) — I swear I was not more than five-and-twenty! — Try the effect of a kind action, if you have heart enough in your Behemothic body, towards bringing back the bloom and elasticity of youth. I say, only *try*! — I understand your sneer. — For worlds *you* would not have betrayed the confidence of a "foolish fond old man, fourscore and upwards," to obtain possession of a vile amount of filthy lucre. — *You* would feel yourself worthy the pillory or the galleys, after so despicable an act of fraud!

*Dicitis, omnis in imbecillitate est et gratia, et caritas, —*

and all weakness is wickedness. Quite right, most upright Public! — "a Daniel, — a second Daniel!" — Stick to your copy-book-morality, and the path of rectitude for ever! Take care, (as poor Richard says,) or Care will take you. Be a good Public! — Continue to the end of your days to demonstrate your patriotism and loyalty by punctuality with your tax-gatherer and toasting the Queen Dowager with four times four; and you will deserve well of your country, and merit the esteem of your family Chaplain and the approbation of the Morning Post.

"I hope," (as Dr. Johnson brutally retorted to the young student who presumed to ask the meaning of one of his sesquipedalian harangues,) — "I hope, my Public, I have said nothing you can understand?"

## CHAPTER XV.

Ceux là, plaignez les !  
 Car ils souffrent, hélas, un mal inguérissable,  
 Ils mêlent une larme à chaque grain de sable  
 Que le temps laisse choir.  
 Leur cœur, comme une orfraie au fond d'une ruine  
 Râle piteusement dans leur maigre poitrine  
 L'hymne du désespoir ! —  
 Leur vie est comme un bois à la fin de l'Automne,  
 Chaque souffle qui passe arrache à leur couronne  
 Quelque reste de vert ;  
 Et leurs rêves en pleurs s'en vont fendant les nues,  
 Silencieux, pareils à des files de grues  
 Quand approche l'hiver.

I HAVE so often sued for the sympathy of my gentler readers in the April mutability of my tender joys and sorrows, that I scarcely dare entreat them anew in my behalf as a lover. Nevertheless, so long as Government kept open its state gambling booths, the lottery offices, people were found ingenuous enough to trust year after year to the golden promises of Messrs. Goodluck and Hazard, risking for the hundred and fiftieth time in their lives the probability of a blank ; — and let me trust they have left simple-minded descendants who will embark with me once more in that Paphian galley, whose purple sails and silver oars — but I beg pardon — I am neither Mr. Hazard nor Mr. Goodluck, and may spare myself the puff-preliminary of an advertisement.

Suffice it that the evident preference entertained for me by Lady Phœbe Locksley over twenty envious rivals, was not churlishly rewarded. I loved her as such generosity, to say nothing of such beauty, deserved to be loved. I loved her like a boy. — I loved her like a child ; — no ! I loved her like CÆCIL — a word comprehending a united edition of Catullus, Thomas Morus, and the Code Moral of White's.

I could perceive, lovely creature ! that she was at times mischievously amused by the spite of which she saw me the object. — De Greyvin, Hartingfield, Rotherhithe and

the rest could not be commonly civil to me ; and as to the Earl, the two scarlet spots upon his cheek-bones burnt there so permanently as to resemble a split tomato, or a sprinkling of his favourite Cayenne ! — For though my prospects were brilliant enough to have satisfied almost any father of a *demoiselle à marier* in the matrimonial mart, Lord Ashby had so decidedly set his heart upon a Duchessedom, — and Clarensfield and Devereux were both so desperately in love, that I was as much a detrimental in *his* eyes, as I could have been in my earliest days of Cecil Danbyism when a clerk of the F. O.

Lady Phœbe did not care — no more did I. The fiercer her father frowned upon me, the more softly she smiled. It seemed to divert her to witness my efforts to conciliate the old monster, by keeping him in conversation by the hour together, near the supper-table at some ball, in order that she might eat her chicken in peace ; — that is, I suppose she was eating her chicken ; — but I so far shared the prejudices of Byron against voracity in woman-kind, that for worlds I would not have seen her open her lovely mouth for any other purpose than the emission of a bon-mot.

I could almost have wished she had not been *quite* so fond of balls ! — It took me out of my orbit, — it took me from my clubs, — it took me from my whist, — to be perpetually dancing attendance, after *her* dancing. But at Lady Phœbe's age, it was only natural. And after all, it was better she should enjoy herself to the utmost now ; and while fair and frank and free, weary herself with the pursuit of pleasure, so as to settle down happily with me a few years later, in domestic tranquillity at Ormington Hall. — The girls who remain torpid in their girlhood, cold as the reflection of the moon in a well, are pretty sure to repay themselves for such ill-timed sobriety by a glowing meridian, ten years after date. — I detest even virtues that are unnatural. I hate a matronly Miss. The cat should begin by being a kitten.

I was now a frequent guest at Lord Ashby's house in Grafton Street ; for as I went there accompanied by Devereux who had adopted me as a sponsor in the faith of coxcombry, the Earl could not decently decline my visits.

The young marquis was shy and diffident, and would not have found courage to go at all, but as the companion of one with whom the fair Phoebe was on the friendliest terms of intimacy. — She was always ready to chat with me. We talked German together, — and discussed men, manners and measures, with a *connaissance de cause*, such as is never acquired save among the glib-tongued *causeries* of the Continent; — *avoir la langue bien pendue* by the way, being an expression that never need be racked by translation into the English tongue.

Talking of continental *causeries*, the curious reader will be interested to learn that the most satisfactory letters reached me from the banks of the Magro. — Nunziata, charmed to find in my young friend an auditor almost as enthusiastic as myself of her reminiscences of my brother, did not relax in her endeavours to restore poor Chippenham to a frame of mind more suitable to his brilliant prospects in life.

“I had set my heart,” wrote the dear Princess, “on making him cast aside the bear’s skin so little appropriate to his condition; and find the nature beneath, as I anticipated, benign, gracious, and grateful as your own.”

And thus, between his gratitude, graciousness and benignity, Chipp was leading a mighty pleasant life of it at Lucca. — He studied Italian with Nunziata; — he read the classics with the good old Prince; — he bore up against the improvisations of the L \* \* i librarian, — just as I had done before him. — It was a task worthy my gentle friend to restore the unhappy boy to himself and his parents. Before Chippenham returned to England to take his seat in Parliament, he would doubtless have become as heart-whole as though there had never been a Jane Danby or Jane Walsingham in the world.

Arthur Cornwallis, who had been the Eton chum of Chipp, used often to question me concerning his present dispositions, and united with me in lamenting that he should have remained in town after Mrs. Walsingham’s marriage, to render himself unpopular by eccentricities of speech which every one was not indulgent enough to trace to momentary irritation. — He was a good fellow enough, Arthur Cornwallis; — well-looking, well-bred, and

ingratiating — luckily enough for *him*, — for a Marquis's younger son has usually his own way to make in the world. — Arthur was a cornet in the life-guards, — leading a showy useless life; — but I liked him well enough to waste occasionally an hour in his company. The sanguine temper of a boy does one's heart good, now and then — like those autumnal gleams of sunshine that call up the after-grass. Even for his own sake, I liked to encourage him

Ο ανδρωπος νεγυιστος πιφυκας.

and I felt interested in his ingenuous spirit. — But my time was about to be less agreeably occupied.

One day, as I was dressing to join a dinner party at Lovegrove's, in which Lord Ashby and Lady Phœbe were included, I received a letter from Mr. Scriven Screwham stating his wish "to be permitted to wait upon me on the morrow upon most important business."

Previous to the death of my poor brother, let the business be ever so "important," Mr. Scriven Screwham used to beg I would do him the favour of waiting upon *him*. I was now, however, so very near being the head of the house under whose patronage *his* had risen out of the mire to the pinnacle of the temple, that it was only seemly the tail should confess its subjection to the head.

I could not eat my white-bait in peace for pondering on what this important business might be. The wooden cupboards calling themselves rooms at the Crown and Sceptre, and looking out upon the swamps of the Isle of Dogs by way of prospect, seemed, between my recent Italian experience and existing impetuosity of feeling, too hot to hold me; — and I felt more angry than amused at the pleasantries of Lady Phœbe upon the flounders dressed in their weeds, and what the head-waiter called "treat with Genoese sarce,"—*i. e., truite à la Genevoise*. — I never, by the by, liked Lady Phœbe half so well when she was in these towering spirits. There was at times a laughing devilry in her mottled eye, that spoke of latent mischief. I have seen among the old Italian masters the daughter of Herodias depicted with just that false expression,—an as-



sumed joyousness to conceal a cruel purpose. — But what do I mean by comparing my own lovely Lady Phœbe,— my own future Lady Ormington, — with the daughter of Herodias !

The mysterious mission from Lincoln's Inn Fields, regarded nothing more nor less than an intimation by Herries to the acting men of business of Lord Ormington, of his intention to ——— my Beloved Public ! ——— I implore you guess to what extent this hard-hearted man could be induced to carry out his notions of business-like propriety ? His wife's father,—his children's grandfather — his benefactor,—his friend ! He was about to take out a Statute of Lunacy against him,— a Statute of Lunacy to prevent his disposing of his property by acts of prodigality, or altering a will made on Danby's death disposing of his personal property in favour of Julia ! Herries had become aware of the gift of ten thousand pounds, as it appeared by the banker's book, to *me*. What had occurred once, might occur twice,— nay, twenty times ; and, the prudent son-in-law reminded Scriven Screwham of his lordship's utter incapacity to resist any personal pecuniary claim,— nay his incompetency to distinguish one person from another.

All this was partially true. Still, the public exposure, the public insult to a poor old man, tottering on the brink of the grave ! In a family so small as ours, surely unanimity should not have been so difficult but that some private arrangement might have been made, previous to the application to Chancery, which Herries, at the instigation of his counsel, had already effected.

I was thunderstruck ; yet scarcely less grieved than astonished. Little as I had loved Lord Ormington in earlier life, for worlds I would not, in this eleventh hour, have held to his lips a sponge filled with vinegar and hyssop to embitter his last moments.

The law advisers of Herries had privately signified to Scriven Screwham and Co., that there was war between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent : — that Herries, certain of my animosity, the moment I should come into possession of the family property, chose to take the initiative and protect his interests. I confess I had

once remarked in his presence that, the strict entail of the Danby estates rendering it impossible for me to do anything material for Mrs. Walsingham, I considered my brother's daughter entitled to a share of her grandfather's personalty; but little imagined that this casual remark would in the end lead to the sequestration of the poor old man's property, or his degradation from the scale of intellectual beings.

For the commission was in progress. The gripe of Chancery, potent as the protection of the wolf over the lamb, had plunged its talons into his person and estates. He was tabooed. He was under the guardianship of a superior court. A jury was about to assemble, — a jury *de lunatico inquirendo*! What a climax to the domestic scandals of Hanover Square!

Herries had instituted himself next friend to the lunatic. Herries had caused "a proper person" to be placed about him for his better security; and no one else was to approach him, on pretence that conversation aggravated his mental disturbance. Poor old man! — placed under the tyranny of a keeper for the simple act of bestowing a portion of his superfluous wealth on the orphan of a beloved son!

I can scarcely venture to depict the height to which my choler was excited by this very unnecessary exposure of our family affairs. I was too indignant to find words for addressing Herries, but attempted a letter of remonstrance to Julia. Julia had been once kind, merciful, equitable. Julia had been the fond and fondly loved sister of poor Danby. I appealed to her in *his* name to reflect upon the injury she was about to inflict upon Jane. She replied, mildly and rationally, but declining interference.

"She had exercised no influence," she said, "over Mr. Herries's proceedings in the business, and could presume to exercise none."

But by the expression "Mr. Herries," which my sister was not wont to use, I perceived that her heart was with *us*; and that it was only a wife-like sense of duty that prevented her avowing her indignation at this dirty fellow's interested barbarity.

From the moment this atrocious business was agitated

it will readily be supposed that I shrank from the observation of society. — Little, Heaven knows, as the infirmities of the poor old man involved *me* in their inheritance, they involved me in their dishonour; — for though the object of Herries was simply to show Lord Ormington's incompetency to the management of his worldly affairs, it would perhaps be necessary to exhibit proofs of weaknesses and deviations from propriety, placing me before the world, if not as the son of a lunatic, at least as the son of a drivelling idiot. — I own I was sometimes obliged to remind myself that it was indispensable to appear conscious of shame as the *son* of Lord Ormington, as well as indignant as a sympathizing fellow creature; and instead of shining forth in my usual glory in the beloved bay-window, or eating my lobster-sallad at Crockey's, I became as domestic as a barn-door fowl.

I even abstained from Lord Ashby's. — But Lady Phœbe sent me so many kind messages by Arthur Cornwallis, — Lady Phœbe assured me that in any family trouble the society of our best friends was so natural a resource, that I had not the heart to stay away. — Old Ashby grew more and more brutal. — But who could wonder! — To have his only daughter preferring a man *frisant lu cinquantaine*, while a dukedom and the handsomest young fellow in England attached to it, lay-disregarded at her feet!

One Sunday, Lady Phœbe having whispered to me a request to meet her and her father at the Zoological Gardens, I found it impossible to refuse; and having found Arthur Cornwallis at the gate, took his arm to go in search of Lord Ashby whose phaeton was in waiting. — We soon joined the party; and had I addressed my observations touching the leader of that morning's Examiner to one of the bears in the pit, instead of to the surly Earl, the growl that answered me might have possessed more suavity. — For Phœbe's sake, however, I persevered; and with the more virtue that while I was talking about Irish municipalities to the father, the daughter was prattling about water-parties with Arthur. — At the hazy extremity of life to which I have now attained, it often strikes me that the sum total of time lost by a professed coxcomb in the propitiation of duennas, fathers, and husbands, deducts

a cruel per centage from his small account of mortal existence !

We were sauntering on from bird to beast and beast to bird, the Earl snapping at me in monosyllables, while the *roucoucoucoulement* of Arthur and his fair companion served as a running accompaniment to his *staccato rinforzato* notes, when, as we stood for a moment to examine the goings to and fro on the earth of the den of wolves, I was struck by a somewhat familiar voice talking very sensible sense indeed, to two young children, who ought to have been wondering whether the wolves before us were any relation to Red Riding Hood's. I am not fond of seeing strong meat administered to babes. It makes *them* sick, and it makes *me*. This learned parent inflicted as severe a dose of Buffon on a poor feeble little boy of four years old, as might have produced a shock upon the constitution of a Professor of the Royal Institution.

This over-physicking with knowledge had evidently undermined the system of the poor little things. That luckless boy and his sister were two yellow-complexioned creatures, that looked as if they had been crammed with information, like turkey chicks, from the very egg-shell.

Lord Ashby, however, seemed as much edified by the lady's natural-historical lesson, as if she had been reciting one of Peter Parley's little books ; which would probably have conveyed all the information available either to his lordship or the infants.

For *my* part I felt as restless as one of the wolves. My presentiments had not deceived me. — The Sir Hans Sloane in petticoats was Sophronia, — not Vavasour I trust, — for the infant martyrs of science called her "Ma!"

I was horribly afraid lest dear Lady Phoebe should see me familiarly recognized by such a party ; more especially with the probability of a fainting fit that might have caused the grebes or otters to be disturbed from their aquatic recreations, in order to procure a sprinkling of water. — But I stole a glance round at Sophronia, and was terror-struck to perceive what havoc eight years and a tropical climate may effect in the human countenance. — The complexion of a cressanne pear, — teeth resembling those

of the beaver in the adjoining hutch, — and wrinkles ad infinitum, like one of the old portraits of Denner! — And then the sharp shrill voice, that seemed accustomed to convey only reprehension or instruction. — How dreadfully well she was bringing up her children! — What a rational mother, — what an admirable member of society, — and what a bonnet, — and what a pair of boots!

I fancy I must have looked aghast as Clarence waking from his dream, when I turned towards Lady Phœbe from the awful spectacle of the woman I had wanted to make my wife; for Arthur Cornwallis asked me what was the matter, and swore the nondescript female near whom he had been standing smelt so strongly of camphor, that she had given me a vertigo. — I was greatly relieved when Lord Ashby, (perceiving that Phœbe, guarded betwixt me and Lord Arthur, was unapproachable to Devereux, who kept hovering round us like a moth,) made his way towards the gate. — I had a sort of horrific impression that Sophronia was a widow, and that the Serpent near the Bread-fruit tree was, after the lapse of years, coming to enfold me in its scaly coil! — Nay, I woke next morning from a hideous dream to that effect; screaming, like the people in Matt. Lewis's tale, — “the anaconda — the anaconda!”

I had little leisure or opportunity to ascertain the truth of my surmises; — for a few days afterwards, that accursed Commission was held at an hotel in Hanover Square, so as not to disturb or intimidate the unfortunate object of the inquest.

The Commission was composed of the most respectable bankers and merchants of the neighbourhood, — precisely the order of persons on whom the parliamentary and official integrity of Herries imposed as a guarantee for the purity of his motives in the present proceeding. They assembled with a conviction that the father-in-law *must* be infirm of mind, whom so upright a statesman saw fit to place under the protection of Chancery. — Poor old man! — eighty-two, — and his hoary hairs thus publicly brought to shame! — I have little doubt that had I been with him up to the moment of his examination before the Commissioners, I could so have sustained his courage and marshalled his ideas, as to enable him to pass muster,

as not much more doting than other old lords suffered to go at large. — But I had not seen him since the hateful affair of the money order ; and he was left to the domination of his sorrow-peopled solitude, in the miserable suite of rooms which had witnessed his succession of domestic tribulations ; — where he had exercised all the virtue of which a nature like his was capable, by leaving vengeance against the wrongers of his hearth to the jealous God they had offended : — and earned pardon for his own trespasses by shedding tears of forgiveness on the bier of the wife, who had so sorely trespassed against him ! — It was easy to imagine that a mind haunted by such reminiscences as those walls conveyed, might be defeatured and worn down by the grinding hand of Care, united with the corroding influence of Time.

The witnesses called to depose to the state of Lord Ormington's faculties, were, first, his physician, who attested him to have been labouring for many months under bodily and mental infirmities, rendering him at intervals incapable of self-government, and at all times incompetent to the discharge of business.

Next to Physic, the Law. — Mr. Scriven Screwham, carefully examined by the Commissioners, admitted that there were periods when his noble client was unable to distinguish one member of his family from another ; and that he had been known to dispose of large sums of money in a loose and inconsistent manner.

After Physic and Law, Divinity. — The Bishop of \* \* \* \* was brought forward as “ an old friend and intimate of Lord Ormington ; ” and though that pompous prelate, like a certain more gorgeous Cardinal, assumed a perpetual attitude of — “ *l'Eglise c'est moi !* ” — methought it would not have injured him to commingle a laurel leaf or two with his episcopal palms, by appearing as “ tutor of his lordship's late distinguished son. ” — All he did, however, was to testify that, since the death of Mr. Danby, the universally respected Member for L——shire, a deficiency in his Lordship's perceptions had been apparent to his friends ; that, on occasionally visiting Hanover Square, Lord Ormington persisted in addressing him as Dr. Droneby, a name he had not borne for the last five-and-

twenty years;—and that his observations upon the political state of the country, more especially as regarded Church Reform, were incoherent and irrational. — The venerable Prelate, in adverting to the painful necessity for the present measure, and the delicate position of his Right Hon. Friend, the President of the Board of ———, because so feelingly eloquent, that a considerable number of the Commissioners were deeply affected. — There is a certain species of eloquence which I regard as the swindling of rhetoric. — Thanks to that of the Bishop, matters were going hard against poor Lord Ormington.

Meanwhile, as the extraordinary manner in which Herries had conducted himself towards me in the business, intitled me to consider myself a hostile party, I had secured the best legal aid; and by the dextrous mode of cross-examination by which the Rope-walk Counsel and others are enabled to make the worse appear the better cause, there was little difficulty in proving that Lord Ormington had, within a short time, issued the most lucid instructions to his Lancashire agents and overseers; for his agricultural interests having no connection with his moral feelings, his mind was on that head dominated by the force of routine. — His bankers were also cited to prove that his powers of calculation were in full activity: that he seldom gave money orders, but when he did so, they were phrased in good form; nay, that at no great distance of time, he had detected a trifling error in the balance of his book.

One or two of the older commissioners looked staggered. To destroy the social identity of a man capable of a sum in addition, seemed alarming. Each of them had a banker's book. Each of them had some relative who might find it agreeable to take the control thereof out of his hands, previous to balancing the debt of nature.

*Interdum vulgus rectum videt.*

They began to perceive that the question had two sides.

The legal advisers of Herries, discerning this reaction, saw that it was time to apply combustibles to the pile. — The banker was recalled. — The banker was cross-ques-

tioned whether, "within a short space of time, an order for no less a sum of money than ten thousand pounds had not been addressed to him by Lord Ormington, and duly honoured, which, in a subsequent conversation with his lordship, he appeared to have totally forgotten, and at length stated to have been given to another party than the one in whose favour it was made out, — a party long deceased?"

All undeniable! — Again, the Commissioners were startled. — Ten thousand pounds disposed of by a stroke of the pen under a false impression of identity! — What fortune could stand against such accessions of weakness! — The inheritance of the noble family of Danby demanded protection at their hands!

By a cunning arrangement of Herries, the evidence of Coulson was next required; and the sight of the grey hairs of that venerable retainer of the venerable peer, produced all the impression anticipated. — The old man trembled and seemed deeply affected. But the vindictive glare of his fierce grey eye, was unsoftened even by his tears.

The ancient serving-man gave his evidence with a tremulous earnestness arising more from anxiety than feebleness. He adverted at some length to the domestic afflictions of his lord, — to his married life as having been most unhappy, — to the loss of the youthful heir of his house, *as it was trusted*, by an accident, and to the death of my brother as having occurred suddenly and mysteriously in a foreign country. There was a tone in his manner of uttering those allusions which caused the Commissioners to interchange glances. — Most of them were matter-of-fact Marylebonians. They began to espy glimpses of something terrible, — glimmerings of a family Castle of Udolpho.

The examination had now extended to a length demanding a pause for breath, — or at least for Madeira and sandwiches; and it was decided that an adjournment was indispensable to afford the Commissioners personal access to the alleged lunatic.

Next day, of course, every item of the examination appeared in the morning papers! — Reporter-authority dif-



ferred as to the exact sum bullied out of the venerable peer; some stating it at ten, some at forty thousand pounds, according to their auricular capabilities or the politics of the paper reported for; some stating that the order had been given to a near relation, others hinting at a professional friend: while one or two darkly hinted that the "*invaluable* casket of Ormington diamonds, *valued* at £60,000, was not forthcoming." I had never heard the family jewels valued at more than £18,000, and knew them to be safe enough at the bankers. — But these inuendoes were intended as civilities to Herries.

The following day poor Lord Ormington, who was fortunately in somewhat stronger health than usual, was prepared by my sister for the visitation he had to undergo. — He was told that two new medical men were coming to see him; — for it had been settled that, not to harass him, he should be waited upon by the Commissioners; who were to surprise him in his ordinary course of occupation, which consisted in rolling between his fingers little paper spilikens for matches, or on his less industrious days, thrusting his fingers through the button-holes of his coat, — during which operation, nothing could exceed the vacant, wo-begone expression of his countenance.

When the strangers entered, as I afterwards learned, they were at once impressed by the idiotism of his aspect. — But the elder of the two, Sir Joseph Harman, an eminent merchant, who retained for the memory of Danby as a public man sufficient respect to be zealous for the welfare of his helpless father, — sat down beside the old man and tenderly and gently attempted to engage him in conversation. — He tried neutral topics. Canada was the bagged fox of the hour, and Sir Joseph (who had perhaps speculated in timber) turned it out to be run down.

Lord Ormington came off victorious. Twenty minutes before, Coulson had been reading the great letters of three morning papers to him, treating of this subject, which neither of them cared for, but which presented the easiest type for the old man's eyes; and the words "House of Assembly," — "Executive Council," and "Toronto," seemed to loose the floodgates of his lordship's memory, for he burst into a dissertation that would have done honour to any Head, even Sir Francis Bond!

Agreeably surprised, (for the Harley Street merchant was a humane and kindly affectioned man,) Sir Joseph, calculating largely upon the effect likely to be produced on his colleagues by such evidences of lucidity of intellect, inquired whether his lordship had any objection to step into his carriage, which was in waiting, and accompany him to an assemblage of gentlemen, to whom the exposition of his opinions on the Canada question might afford valuable service.

Lord Ormington was amazed; evidently considering his new Doctor as much a madman as Sir Joseph came prepared to consider *him*. — But the notion of the exploit tickled his fancy. — With the cunning of fatuity, he rejoiced in the idea of vexing Herries, who invariably opposed all communication with strangers; and in all the unsuspiciousness of second childhood, he went his way into the snare.

A considerable impression was produced upon all present by the venerable appearance of the poor old man, when gently led into the room, between his servant and Sir Joseph. — His salutations were courteous and gentlemanly; — nothing in his deportment unbecoming his position in life; — and when spurred anew on the Canada chapter, he recommenced his lesson with fluency. But alas! he became perplexed, — and the commixture of strong sense and senile babbling, was precisely as when a bullfinch, who has been piping its air as if incapable of mistake, suddenly breaks off and gives utterance to a series of meaningless notes, — then resumes the tune for a bar or two, — to disappoint its auditors by fresh bewilderment.

On the whole, however, the Commissioners were startled by the fragments of sound policy emitted by the patient; and Lord Ormington, pleased to find himself so respectfully interrogated, seemed to labour back to reason, in order to acquit himself with propriety.

As a becoming thing whereon to sound the depths of a nobleman's reason, some one mentioned the king. It happened that the old man entertained a personal affection for William IV.; and his remarks were motived by such almost fraternal regard, that what was in truth mere sym-

pathy of manhood passed for a noble zeal of loyalty, highly honourable to his aristocratic instincts.— Poor Lord Ormington had much less to fear at that moment, for his liberty, than Herries for the reversion his ungodly coveting of which was the origin of that cruel investigation !

Unluckily, a Scottish banker, named Macpherson, of somewhat less easy conscience than the rest, chose to consider it his duty to explain to the old gentleman, the motive of the meeting into which he had been thus introduced ; — inquiring whether his lordship were aware that a Commission had been appointed by the Lord Chancellor, for the purpose of examining into his capability of the administration of his worldly affairs.

Would he had been at the bottom of the Clyde ! — The question had to be repeated three times, with all the variations of delicate circumlocution, before Lord Ormington could be made even to surmise its meaning ; till Herries's solicitor officiously whispered the unmistakable phrase of "*de lunatico inquirendo*."

The old Lord, who had been quietly seated among the Commissioners, — now started from his chair ; and though usually incapable of stirring a step without assistance, tottered towards the table, and leaning on it, made the man of business articulately repeat the words whose hateful purport had thus stirred his feelings.

A hectic glow rushed instantly to his pale face, and a general tremor seized his frame, as he clasped his withered hands together, — at the risk, as every beholder apprehended, of falling to the ground. — But the strength of indignation was within him !

"MAD?" — cried he ; "they want to prove me *mad* ? — to deprive me of my liberty ? — to shut me up from light and life, — to degrade me, — to annihilate me, — to drive down my grey hairs with shame into the grave ? — And the law will permit them to do this ? — Because I am no longer strong and vigorous, they will be allowed to chastise me as a child, — to scoff at me, — to call me fool — idiot, — madman ? — Oh ! why am I thus alone among my enemies ! — Why did I not die with my poor son ? — My God — my God ! — Why hast thou forsaken me !"

But that he was supported by the interposition of those around him, the heart-broken man would have fallen prostrate. — They placed a chair for him. — They besought him to be composed. — They pitied him with exceeding pity. — But his best solace was in the tears that now burst forth, and poured down his aged cheeks.

The same worthy man who had already, in his excess of good will, plunged a dagger into his heart, now answered and said unto him in the vein of Eliphaz the Temanite, or rather as children are told when they are flogged, that “all was intended for his good;” — that it was to protect *his* person and fortune the commission had been instituted; — that the Chancellor was the father of the fatherless, — the guardian of the helpless; — nay, that it was by his natural heirs, and next of kin, by whom the court of Chancery had been petitioned in his behalf.

Again, the unhappy man started to his feet.

“I knew it” — cried he with frantic rage. — “I felt it, — I felt there was venom in the wound! — I felt it could proceed from no hand but *his*. — CECIL! the accursed Cecil, — robber, — murderer, — monster! — the interloper in my family, who stole my children’s bread, — the reptile who crept to their cradles and poisoned them with his slaver! — Assassin, — wretch, — oh! were he only here, that I might spring to his throat and make my last act an act of justice, by strangling him with these feeble hands! The law might then do its worst upon me. — Yet what could it do more than it is about to do, — declare me a lunatic and erase my name from the roll of responsible beings! — More merciful to kill me, and bury me at once! — Oh! I shall go mad, — *mad indeed*, — if this torture be prolonged.”

A dead silence prevailed in the room, after the frantic man had fallen back exhausted in his chair. — No one paid much heed to the words he had uttered. His disturbed manner and haggard eyes avouched them to be the ravings of insanity.

Still, Mr. Macpherson ventured to whisper a hope that he would subdue the unchristianly delusions by which he allowed his mind to be irritated against his son, — his only son, — the inheritor of his rank and fortune.

"My son is not of this world, or I should not be vilified and molested thus!" faltered the weeping old man, without rising from his seat. — "Danby is in his grave, — in his cold, cold grave, — and his child is in his grave, — and his wife. — All of them, all of them! — And *whodrove* them there? — CECIL! — and may the everlasting penalties of —"

"Be calm, my lord! — I entreat you to be calm!" — interposed one of the medical men present. — "As the father of Mr. Danby — as —"

"I tell you again I am *not* his father," cried Lord Ormington. "The law made me so, — the law which is about to make me a madman! — Sir Lionel Dashwood was his father. — Cecil Danby is an alien, — a changeling, — an outcast! — And he will inherit all! — Houses and lands, — houses and lands, — name, titles, honours, — all, all, all! — But he shall inherit my malediction too. — My curse shall be upon him. He shall never thrive, — he shall never come to honour. — The blood of Danby's child is upon his head, — and the outrage heaped on my grey hairs is upon his head; and every man's hand shall be against him, and his name accursed in the land for evermore."

The hoarse gasping voice in which Lord Ormington uttered these intemperate denunciations gradually subsided into inarticulate mutterings, till at length he seemed to sink into utter insensibility; when, at a signal from Sir Joseph, he was gently lifted away in his arm chair and placed in the carriage. — His restoration to consciousness in his accustomed chamber, must have only too grievously resembled that of the heart-broken Lear, when similarly borne away, oppressed by similar afflictions.

The unanimous verdict of the jury upon Lord Ormington was "*non compos mentis*, and incapable of managing his own affairs since the 1st of the current month."

Herries caused me to be apprised that it was at *his* lawyer's suggestion the date was so recent, — in order to spare me the humiliation of a legal dispute touching the large sum of money paid to my order.

I perfectly understood him. — The hint was intended as a sop to the future Cerberus of Ormington Hall: —

*Habent insidias hominis blanditiæ mali!*

## CHAPTER XVI.

Once more I saw him when his spirits fail'd,  
 And my desire to aid him then prevail'd ;  
 He show'd a softer feeling in his eye,  
 And watch'd my looks, and own'd the sympathy.  
 'Twas now the calm of wearied pride ; so long  
 As he had strength was his resentment strong.  
 But in that place, with strangers all around,  
 And worse than strangers, to have something found  
 Allied to his own heart, — an early friend  
 To soothe the sorrows of his journey's end :  
 One link, however slender, of the chain  
 That held him where he could not long remain ;  
 The one sole interest ! — No, he could not now  
 Retain his anger, — Nature knew not how.  
 And so, there came a softness to his mind,  
 And he forgave the usage of mankind.  
 His cold long fingers now were press'd to mine,  
 And his faint smile of kinder thoughts gave sign ;  
 His lips mov'd often as he tried to lend  
 His words their sound, and softly whisper'd " friend."  
 Not without comfort in the thought express'd  
 By that calm look, the sufferer sank to rest !

CRABBE.

Duplex libelli dos est : quod risum movet  
 Et quod prudenti vitam consilio movet.

PHED.

I did not reappear upon the London boards during the brief remainder of the season — the proceedings of that cruel Commission had been too public. — I afterwards discovered that Lord Ashby had been careful to place the most odiously minute details of the newspaper accounts in the hands of his daughter. But Lady Phœbe answered him with a smile, in words borrowed from his own occasional bursts of irritability, — that " nobody in their senses put the smallest trust in newspapers."

She was even careful and kind enough, blessed angel, to send me repeated messages by Lord Arthur Cornwallis, — begging that, since I shunned general society, I would

become only the more accessible to my friends! — Oh ! woman, — woman !

Meanwhile, the custody of Lord Ormington's person was consigned to Herries, — with advice from the Master in Chancery, that since his lordship's irritability was so strangely excitable by sight or mention of his son, Mr. Danby should be restricted from approaching him. — A handsome sum was apportioned to his maintenance, and a sum quadrupling my former allowance, to mine ; — the Court of Chancery contemplating me only as immediate heir to the princely fortune of the lunatic.

But though this secured my independence, though it even placed me in a situation to offer my hand to Lady Phœbe Locksley, gladly would I have renounced the unsought advantage, to have secured the hapless old man from the ignominy he had undergone, — the oppression he was undergoing.

For the galling consciousness of his situation so far justified the precaution of Herries, that he was now a lunatic indeed ! — He never recovered the use of his scattered senses. — He became violent. — He was subjected to coercion. Like a chidden child, he had to beg for mercy and pardon to his keepers. He underwent all the anguish, a mere apprehension of which inspires merciful hearts to say of a confirmed lunatic, " Better he were in his grave ! "

It did not last long. A few months afterwards, I received an intimation from his medical attendants, (my enemy Coulson was no more ! ) that if I desired to see his lordship my father yet alive, I must hasten to the villa at Kilburn where he was confined.

I declined. — To what purpose irritate his dying moments ? — or if in the state of stupor into which he was said to have recently fallen, to what end find myself in presence of a living corpse ? — But, on my refusal, I received a visit from his physician, an able, urbane, strong-hearted man, who informed me that his patient, though fast sinking into the grave, was so thoroughly restored to consciousness, that, at Lord Ormington's express desire, he had obtained an order from the Master entitling me to visit him.

Perceiving my irrepressible reluctance, Dr. ——— assured

me that I had no further animosity to apprehend; that his lordship's mood was now serene, benignant, all that could be desired in a dying man.

"You will impart comfort, Sir," said he; "and if you will permit me to say so, perhaps receive it, by a parting interview."

I went, — with what compunction of feeling will be readily understood. — I found Lord Ormington established in the greatest comfort; — but on approaching the door of his chamber, I stopped short and communed with my own heart, — like Frank Walsingham at that of his injured wife.

The old man was propped with pillows, — his mien composed, — his long grey hair and beard imparting an almost patriarchal appearance. — But there was a light of comfort in his eyes; — the light that so often irradiates the face of the dying, — like the last gleams of light contending with the closing evening upon the sky, — or rather the first gleams of light annunciative of coming day, — even the fore-showing of immortality!

"I wished to place my hand in your's, Cecil, before I take my leave of this world," said the dying man, in a low but distinct voice, as soon as we were alone: — "Through life, there has been a natural enmity between us. — But I am going where all human ties are dissolved, — where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, — where God shall be all in all. — If I have ever injured *you*, Cecil, forgive me; — if you have injured *me*, accept my forgiveness."

I answered him with respect, — with *more* than respect — with deep emotion. — It was with his cold withered hand enclasping mine, that he resumed.

"I wished also," said he, "to bequeath my tenants to your kindness. — You are about to become Lord Ormington. — You *are* Lord Ormington. — Be indulgent with them, Cecil, — they have been faithful and dutiful to their old master, — if they be less so with their new, the fault will be his own. — I do not recommend my grandchild to you; — for you loved her father even as he loved *you*, and will be to her as the parents she has lost. — But I recommend the good name of my fathers to you. — It has



been heard of aforetime with distinction and honour. Let it never, *never* be found among the enemies of the country !”

Such was the purport of our interview. — He who had sought it, brought it to a timely close. He wished, he said, to preserve his remaining strength for the last comforts of his religion. He gave me his blessing, and I, in return, my tears. At that moment, I saw in him the father of Danby: and he died as became the parent of such a son.

I assumed my brother's place to mourn for him, to lay his head in the grave; and my sadness was deep and genuine. For I knew that he had suffered much; — and that it was partly through *my* fault no kindred heart was there to grieve over his remains.

Unmerited affliction hath a hallowing power that ennobles even the meanest natures. The heart severely searched by the hand of God, becomes sacred as the dust whereto the Cross of redemption, borne by the Cyrenian, bequeathed its terrible impression.

I expressly stipulated that none of the Herries family should show their faces at the funeral ceremony, or thenceforward at Ormington Hall!

La Bruyère has told us, and most of us have uttered a sad Heigho to the lesson, that “the events we ardently desire seldom occur; or occur at a moment when they have lost their power of conferring happiness.”

There had been more times than one in my life when, to have become master, as now, of an ancient Barony and revenues exceeding those of a German principedom, Mephistopheles might have had an easy bargain of me. — Think of CECIL, — the Cecil of 1810, — of 1815, — nay, even of 1820, — a PEER! — And now, — on whose shoulders had the ermine fallen? — But why belie myself! — There was manhood, — youth, — nay, boyhood in me yet! — There *must* have been; — or Lord Ashby would not have been so enraged when two months afterwards he found me invited by the Ilfracombs to meet him and Lady Phoebe for the Christmas holidays at Dunmorrah Castle.

It was strange, I admit, that the Duchess could not be persuaded to look on me as the rival of her son; — for I

accidentally discovered that she was furious at her neighbour Lady Penlinnan having engaged Arthur Cornwallis, and bringing him with her to the balls and public days at the Castle; though every creature in London was aware that Lady Phœbe noticed poor Arthur only as a good-natured lad, whom I was fond of having about me.

We had not met since my accession of rank, nor indeed above once since the unfortunate publicity attending the statute of lunacy affair; and I was delighted to find her manner unchanged. Many girls, conscious that I was now in a position to afford her a suitable alliance, would have affected coyness. But dear Phœbe seemed above it! She frankly admitted herself charmed to find me at the Castle; albeit the poor Earl, her father, seeing how admirably her beauty became those noble galleries and banqueting-rooms, offered up hourly prayers to Heaven that she might not quit the place till pledged to become Marchioness of Devereux, and looked murderously towards us every time we exchanged a syllable. Had Lady Mereworth's Calabrian been still in England, or any other gentleman with black mustachios willing to undertake the poisoning of a nobleman for a proper consideration, I would not have answered for my life.

It was my *début* in the dignities of life; and much as I had found cause to be satisfied with my position in country-visiting, as CECIL, I can promise my Public that Lord Ormington had the best of it. It is amazing how much value seemed attached to my opinion, now that it was attached to a vote. People listened to me as though I must inevitably have specific views on all possible subjects; and as if

The Constitution was an Ark, which I  
Must needs support with zeal and sanctity;

while the Duke kept pestering me about the quality of his venison, as though the possession of a park had conferred aldermanic powers of degustativeness on my palate.

Lady Phœbe smiled; and the more she smiled, the more her father pished and pshawed. The contemplation of ducal coronets from morning till night, emblazoned on

liveries, plate, hall-chairs, carriages, harness, prayer books, everything that aristocratic vanity stamps with its badge, as John Brown J B s the fleecy flanks of his sheep, served to titillate his predominant mania and infuriate him against my want of precedence. Lord Ashby took as much pains to stave me off, whenever dancing was going on, as if I were a more dangerous partner than a mere detrimental, like Arthur Cornwallis. To be sure, Arthur was below his animosity. His daughter's undisguised attachment to myself must prevent any other man, — even though a Marquis, — from forming undue expectations.

By the way, I was somewhat amused to notice, — though I scarcely know why I record it here, — that the dear Princess at Lucca had ceased to write to me, except through the medium of Chippenham! They were all spending a charming winter together at Milan, where the high position occupied by her father, Count Harrach, as Governor of the city, secured her distinctions and claims upon her time so peremptory, that she had probably less leisure than at Lucca for correspondence.

Chipp, however, who appeared in the highest spirits, gladly took the duty off her hands, — and the "*riverire caramente*" conveyed in her messages was as kindly expressed as ever. The Mereworths, indeed, sometimes observed that Chipp was now of an age to be better at home; that too long a sojourn in Italy might become fatally influential over his habits and principles. But this was mere parental fidgettiness. What signified his remaining till the spring? They ought to have been too happy at the auspicious changes wrought in his feelings by his intimacy with such high-souled people as the L\* \* is.

I am approaching a climax. — I have no doubt the reader perceives as much by my style; for I invariably wax prosy when about to relate something unsatisfactory, — as a nervous singer prolongs the symphony of a song, in order to gather breath and courage.

There was a large party at the Castle, and most of the neighbouring houses were full of Christmas company. The moon being amiably disposed towards us, we had a suc-

cession of balls and private theatricals, night after night, within a moderate radius; which the severities of a tremendous frost, and the perils and dangers of exceeding bad roads did not bring *quite* within risk of deodand in case of any sacrifice of human life in the attempt.

I own I did not find these forlorn hopes altogether so captivating as I might have done twenty or five-and-twenty years before; for there is such a thing as rheumatism left in the world, whatever fleecy hosiery and vapour-baths may say to the contrary. — However, I plucked up courage and bore all like a hero for the sake of my Phœbe! — Poor little soul! It would have been scandalous to leave her without the support of my presence, when forced to divide her evenings into a partnership account with such boys as Devereux and Arthur Cornwallis.

Such at least was my view of the question whenever we were together; and I consequently bore with the fretfulness, the almost insolence of old Ashby, as thorns inseparable from my garland of roses.

The Duchess of Ilfracomb seemed to smile at my patience under the probation, as if gratified to see me pay the penalty of successful rivalry with her handsome young son; — and Lord Walsingham, — (for the old Earl and Viscount Rotherhithe existed no longer, and the peerage had gained a solemn prig the more,) sometimes hinted to me that “between ourselves, — he did not wish to be officious, — he desired to make no mischief, — only people *did* consider that I was beginning to occupy a most degrading position under the impertinent resentments of Lady Phœbe Locksley’s father.”

Talking of Walsingham, I now began to laud my stars that the extinction of Rigmarole had preserved me from any untimely exercise of my senatorial capacities. — Neither he nor I had yet taken our seats in the Upper House; and it was amazing the difference of interest attached to *his* debut and mine. — His measure had been taken, — mine was doubtful. — I was perhaps a Colossus, — perhaps a Myrmidon. — I might prove in that august assembly a Gulliver at Brobdignag, or a Gulliver among the Lilliputians. I knew pretty well the trouble their pigmy legions would have in attempting to bind down the

man-mountain. — But their own enlightenment as to my dimensions was to come.

Visu carentem magna pars veri latet !

I say again, I am approaching a crisis. — At the ball given the following night at Penlinnan Abbey, I enjoyed a charming opportunity of satisfying the misgivings of Phœbe as to the declarations of affection I had so often, perhaps so unfairly, delayed. There were some charming cloisters adjoining the ball-room, into which Lady Phœbe seemed determined to allure me ; — for she went and stood there with Arthur Cornwallis, as if to contemplate the moon through the arched windows ; and instead of moon-gazing, kept looking back over her shoulder at me, to ascertain whether I were following.

I could not but obey the call ; and the Duchess of Ilfracomb, having beckoned away Arthur to despatch him on some errand after a stray fan or handkerchief, I took dear Phœbe's white arm within mine, and after drawing her on towards the further extremity of the cloister, where it was less and less cheered by the illuminations of the ball-room, and finally deepened into darkness softened at intervals by the moonlight darting through the painted windows, pressed her nearer to my side, as every man is entitled to do a lovely girl who chooses to find herself with him where there is none but the moon to interfere.

I asked her to be mine, — asked it nearly as succinctly as I now relate the question ; for, after all, when one arrives at *that* moment of a courtship, eloquence becomes frivolous and vexatious. — I asked her to give me Lady Phœby Locksley, and to take Cecil Lord Ormington in return.

It was all but dark. — I *pressed* for an answer, — yet for a minute no answer was vouchsafed. Though pretty well aware what it must be, I was eager, I own, to hear from those precious lips the certification of my happiness.

When the answer came it was inarticulate. I suppose the answers of most girls in similar situations are not *very* distinct. — Sobs of emotion are apt to mingle with the words. I must admit, however, that the impediment to

Lady Phœbe Locksley's articulation bore little resemblance to crying. All I could gather from her reply was an entreaty to be permitted to consider till the morrow.

I could not conceive what there was to consider about. We had been intimate half-a-year. She was perfectly familiar with my appearance, temper, character, mind, rank, fortune. — I suppose, however, it is too much to hope that women will ever renounce on such occasions their sex's privilege,

the dear delight of giving pain ;

and so I was forced to give the fair, soft arm, linked within mine, another gentle squeeze, — and my assent.

I wish my Public nothing half so unpleasant as the sleepless hours passed between a ball, over whose lobster-sallads no Gunter has presided, and where the queen of one's heart has bidden one wait till next morning for the ultimatum which is to crown one's earthly happiness, — and the breakfast bell next morning !

Other bells, however, were destined to precede the breakfast-bell on the day in question ! Just as I had fallen into a doze, (in which I dreamed of wandering with Phœbe, our arms and waist as tenderly intertwined as a true-lover's knot, along an avenue at Thebes formed of sphinxes of porphyry, and it struck me that their green eyes had a wicked gleam, and that their marble noses curled sneeringly at me as I passed !) — a sudden ringing startled me from my pillow ; — a ringing loud and incessant, as though the house were on fire, or the Duchess in a fainting fit, or Cayenne Locksley in a passion.

My last hypothesis was the true one. — Lord Ashby was the ringer of that accursed peal ; — the rage of Kean in Shylock, when raving after his daughter and his ducats, being mildness compared with his exacerbation of spirit on discovering that Lady Phœbe was at least forty miles from the castle, on her road towards becoming Lady Arthur Cornwallis ! Servants had been bribed, — post horses secured ; — and instead of retiring to bed on her return from the ball, she had assumed a morning dress, trudged with her maid a mile through the snow to the spot

where a travelling carriage was in waiting, — *et fouette cocher !*

I very much doubted whether I should have courage to join the party at breakfast. But while deliberating on the subject, Lord Ashby demanded an interview in my dressing room. Concluding that the thunderstorm wanted to dissolve itself into a shower, and that he wished to throw himself into my arms and implore my forgiveness for his injustice, I acceded. When, to my great dismay, in burst the angry man more infuriated than ever ; — accusing me, of — guess what, oh ! even most Talleyrandic of my readers ! — *of confederacy with the young couple !*

I took the hint, — I accepted the affront, — I even offered him satisfaction. — Better pass for anything than a victim. To be once fairly exposed as a dupe, is to expose oneself to the machinations of the designing for the rest of one's days.

Of course, people took care we should not fight. — A reconciliation was patched up, — his lordship's horses ordered for the North road, — and mine, for London.

I know not how many of the party took Lord Ashby's view of the case, or how many surmised the bitterness of my feelings as I stepped into my carriage. I thought I could distinguish Walsingham's laugh, as I drove away ; — the ass's kick in the face of the sick lion !

*Risus inepto res ineptior nulla est ! —*

— I swore it should be the last time I was converted by any young lady into a screen, — a stalking horse, — a conductor for the electric fluid of a thundering Papa !

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Hic securâ quies, et nescia fallere vita  
 Dives opum variarum; hic latis otia fundis,  
 Speluncæ, vivique lacus: hic frigida Tempe,  
 Mugitusque boum, mollesque sub arbore somni.*

VIRGIL.

Las de ce calme plat où, d'avance fanées,  
 Comme une eau qui s'endort, croupissent nos années,  
 Las d'étouffer ma vie en un salon étroit  
 Avec de jeunes fats et des femmes frivoles,  
 Echangeant sans profit de banales paroles;  
 Las de toucher toujours mon horizon du doigt  
 Pour me refaire au grand et me rélargir l'âme —

I RESIGNED myself, for the space of a twelvemonth and a day, to the solitudes of my Lancashire estates, and the ennobling society of no less a personage than Cecil, 12th Lord Ormington, Baron Ormington of Daske in the peerage of England; — issuing only twice from my lair, — once, to consult Cartwright about my teeth, and the other time, to stand godfather to a little John Danby Walsingham. — His father would fain have had him called CECIL. But I would not hear of it. From one end of Europe to the other, enough has been heard of that name; which now figures in the critical review of Abo and in the catalogue of the royal library at Pesth, accompanied by the words “*vir ingeniosus*,” — “*vir acutissimus*,” — “*vir præstantissimus*!” — It is recognised among the philosophers as one of the types of the epoch; — it has become historical; — it has become immortal. — It savours of Corinthian brass, Carrara marble, and the Heaven-pointing pyramid! — I preferred therefore that the babe born to our house should bear a name commemorative of the comparatively obscure virtues of my brother.

For some years past, I had been saying to myself, in the depths of my heart, that the moment I came into possession of Ormington Hall, should be the signal of a complete reformation and refashionment of the place. In my



boyhood, I had loathed it, In my maturity I found it might me *made* endurable. As I drew nearer to possession, I thought it might be converted into an earthly Paradise. But I had not been ten days in possession, before I fancied that already, it was as near perfect as any earthly spot that had not a cherub with flaming sword at the gates! All I did, therefore, was to have it put into complete repair, and restored precisely to its original state. It is only by adhering to an original plan that we ever secure attention to the fitness of things.

Had I once given license to innovation, I should have been having those rascally improvers rooting up the old trees, — demolishing the old turrets, — enlarging the old windows, — narrowing the old chimneys, — destroying the yew-walks, — razing the herb-garden. The thing would no longer have been in keeping, unless by such alterations as allowed not one of the old stones to remain upon the other; and I leave it to those who have enjoyed the delights and cost of the same, to describe the pleasure of living ten years amid brick and mortar, — running one's head twenty times a day against scaffold poles and white-washer's pails, — and in the end, finding that the cost of your *new* mansion has rendered it impossible for you to reside in! — Besides, ten years would have brought *me* to the close of my allotted threescore, — and what had then been left for enjoyment? Better to accept the fine old place as bequeathed to me by the veneration of centuries! — Ahem!

As we advance further and further along the Path of Life, where every birth-day is inscribed at intervals on a series of mile-stones, whereof a tombstone is the last, — to whose brambles, tatters of our hearts adhere at every step, and upon whose flints our bleeding feet leave tokens of the anguish of our pilgrimage, — we grow cautious over our chances of happiness, as a banker pondering over an investment.

Existence has become a matter of arithmetic. We calculate our pleasures by the rule of three, and decide upon the greater or the less quantity of enjoyment, by the medium of Vulgar Fractions!

*My* Rule of Three decided, that if three months in the

Country had procured me worlds of happiness and peace; twelve months would produce four times as much.

I determined to try. I resolved to survey the face of nature with the varying sunlight of twelve successive months shed upon its features; — and the experiment was satisfactory.—At the close of the year, I shook hands with the Right Hon. Lord Ormington, of whom I had seen a plaguy deal more than of the face of nature; and voted him, — not a deuced good fellow—my time for that was over, — but a very accomplished nobleman! — Like poor Lord Dudley after a solitary journey in a postchaise, I found myself so amusing that I was very near inviting myself to dinner.

This sort of chimney-corner intimacy is a trying ordeal of a man's qualities! I am happy to say that I came out of it completely to my satisfaction.

Nobody can say that the world is the worse for wear. — Per progress of centuries, the earth we live on has been dis-infested of its wild beasts and venomous serpents. Cuvier will supply a list of the monstrous brutes, — all but anonymous from being long obsolete, — we have suppressed; and even in Britain, we have taken tribute of wolves' heads and hung up our adders in chemist's bottles, till the country is a much pleasanter place to live in. Plague, pestilence, and famine, are now recorded exclusively in the Ritual. We have no more sweating sickness, — no wailing of the multitude for bread. — The earth brings forth her fruits in due season, and does not claim our bones an hour earlier than of yore, in payment of her punctuality.

All the additional evils that Civilization hath engendered in lieu of the mal' aria and beasts of prey she hath chased away, are of a purely moral nature: — chicaneries of law — mountebankerries of medicine — ostentations of divinity; — for factious Bishops, quacking Doctors, and griping Advocates, are behemoths and quartan agues of the especial creation of mankind.

The 12th Lord Ormington and CECIL debated these questions together at the easy length of debates never interrupted by a division — I began to consider the Poor Laws a subject for my serious contemplation. — Every body knows the section of Cardinal Richelieu's celebrated

TESTAMENT, taking into consideration "*jusqu' à quel point on doit permettre que le peuple soit à son aise ;*" and though I do not altogether agree with that politic Prelate, or prelatie politician, in desiring to govern them hive-fashion, by leaving them only as much honey as will enable them to work for more, till it is time to be stifled, I must say I consider the exorbitant Poor Laws of England to amount to a premium to pauperism ; a spreading of compost over the land for the cultivation of pernicious fungi, — which, if I were not a peer of the realm, I would call toad-stools. — I had not forgotten having heard the Italians describe *their* paupers as *poor* poor, and the English as *rich* poor. — I had not forgotten that when the late Lord Ormington gave an ox to the populace on the King's birth-day, they pulled down his park-paling to make the fire for roasting it. — I had not forgotten that St. Paul exhorted the poor "to work with quietness and eat their own bread," decreeing that "if any should not work, neither should he eat ;" — and why should modern legislators be wiser than St. Paul ? — Little did that expositor of Christian law, that Cicero of the Gospel, conjecture that one of the plague-spots of social life would be erected into a virtue, like cretinism among the Eastern nations, — by that pernicious letter of license called parochial provision. — Ahem !

By living alone, I had lost the habit of what Rabelais calls *musant et baguenaudant* through the affairs of life ! One trifles with other people, — it is a mistake to trifle with oneself. — At the period Rigmarole was lost to the Danby family, and I began to have the fear of the Hustings before my eyes as a candidate for popular favour and the county, I had coaxed myself into so much liberalism as to entertain almost with patience the Education of the People, and such like toys of Philanthropy. — But my seclusion at Ormington had caused the election-scales to fall from my eyes ; and I was now convinced that of all the elements of anarchy introduced into a kingdom, the elements of Grammar are the most fatal : — ba be bi bo bu — having done more towards the subversion of social order than all the Chartism ever written down into notice by the Scribes and Pharisees of Oxford. — "*N'est pire valet que celui que raisonne !*" says the proverb, — and our ploughmen

never began to argue with us, till we taught them to chop logic instead of chaff.

I used to discuss this question, day after day, with Dr. Birchington, (Droneby's successor as rector of Ormington; and at no distant period perhaps destined to march in the Danby detachment towards an ecclesiastical peerage;) who was good enough to drop in occasionally with Mrs. B. and take a slice of my family haunch. — He was a man of great erudition and strong powers of argument; only, as we had nothing else to do, I am afraid we sometimes sophisticated extravagantly over our claret; — discussing Pauperism and Colonization, somewhat in the manner of Pericles and Protagoras, who, when their beloved Epitimes was slain in a joust by a lance, passed a whole day in examining whether the cause of death resided in the lance itself, or the man who had made it, or the magistrate who had licensed the games, or Hercules in whose honour they were instituted!

I could perceive, by the way, that since my accession to the peerage, the good Doctor had taken it into his head I had been playing Prince Hal through my hot youth, in order to surprise the world with a battle of Agincourt; — or rather that, for the reason adduced by the niggers for the muteness of monkey's, who could "talk berra well if dem likee," that I had been shamming stupid to escape being made to work.

By the way, my sentences are getting long-winded. My aristocratic fastidiousness, dear Public, appears to recede from what Paul Louis called the *mitraille de l'éloquence*, the apostrophe; for I perfectly agree with that great master of prose, that, instead of saying, "*Nicole! apporte moi mes pantoufles!*" one should break forth into "*ô mes pantoufles!*" and "*et toi Nicole — et toi!*" Oh! Public, therefore, — a word to your wisdom! — but I dare say you know no more than a Post, — (I mean the Morning,) what I am talking about.

By the way, that very super-education of the People made me for a moment hesitate to blow up the wreck of the Royal George in these volumes. How do I know they may not fall into the hands of my own footman, and induce some impertinent parallel with myself, after the

manner of Plutarch? — I have my doubts whether *any* domestic servants (be the Household royal, gentle or simple,) are to be trusted with benefit of Clergy. — If they *can* write, they are sure to keep journals and indite memoirs—such as those of Dangeau, or Mesdames de Motteville, Campan, du Hausset, and our own incomparable Lady-in-Waiting; — who Heaven knows have done their best and worst to accredit the old definition of a court, “*l’oisiveté, la bassesse, tous les vices, et une charmante société!*”

I was advancing within five or six thousand miles of becoming a country gentleman. — I began to find myself growing almost Tremaineish and cotton-night-cap-py.

Meetings or public calls I never miss’d,  
To dictate often, always to assist:  
Often the Quorum join’d, and not a cause  
Pertain’d to them, but I could quote the laws;  
Even on tithes and residence display’d  
A fund of knowledge for the hearer’s aid:  
And could on glebe and farming, wool, and grain,  
A long discourse, and without pause, maintain.

Dr. Birchington, (who was a little too apt to address me in the monkish Latin of Frère Barlette, to his flock, — “*vos quæritis à me, fratres carissimi, quomodo itur ad Paradisum? — hoc dicunt vobis campanæ monasterii, — ‘dando, dando, dando!’*” — but to whom at present I had given nothing but family dinners!) seemed exceedingly anxious I should repair to London and enlighten the world from my seat in Parliament, as I condescended to enlighten *him* from the head of my table. But though a learned and sensible man, for whose opinion I had the highest respect, I would not so soon sacrifice my luxurious domestic comfort to the welfare of the nation. I verily believe I should have remained till this day stagnant at Ormington Hall, but for a national event, that stirred to the utmost the nerves and fibres of the British Empire.

I know not whether loyalty had descended to me as an heir-loom with the other aristocratic hereditaments of Lord Ormington, or whether the feeling that suddenly warmed my blood were the same chivalrous devotion that caused

the swords of the Magnats of Hungary to leap from their scabbards in behalf of their young and lovely Maria Theresa. But certain it is that the cry of the noble senators of Presburg, "Let us die for our QUEEN!" — was never echoed with more cordial gallantry, than by the lips of CECIL!

I seemed to have grown ten years younger for the notion of living under petticoat government. There were old women enough and to spare, on the other thrones of Europe: — Our own, God save the mark, was about to be submitted to a young one!

But something too much of this. — Cecil Cecilizeth.

It is time we should ensconce our robes, and take our seat as Baron Ormington of Daske.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

A few moments snatched from the contemplation of political crimes, bloodshed, and treachery, are a few moments gained to all lovers of innocent illusion. — BECKFORD.

Dicite Io Pæan, et Io bis dicite Pæan!

Non usitata nec tenui ferar  
Penna —

HOR.

NEVER shall I forget the warmth of enthusiasm that prevailed in London at that moment! — The city, — the very kingdom, — seemed to fancy itself grown young, and even the climate to imagine it had attained a second spring, because the sceptre was glittering in the hands of girlhood! — It was a new, — a peculiar, an almost bewildering position for old England; and the severest ordeal that her monarchical institutions, (just then, too, amid the general decadence of monarchy,) could have been exposed. — But glory to Britannia! she came out of the trial triumphant. Even I, though close familiarity with the stage-trick of royal life had somewhat depressed my veneration for re-

galities, even *I* felt touched to the soul by the idea of the duties now peculiarly connected with the thrice-hallowed prerogative of the throne. — I saw that the peers of a youthful queen ought to become Paladins, and that CECIL must be foremost in their ranks.

I had a sort of notion, — I may be pardoned, for it was the notion of all England, — that Victoria was a child. — I reached London with notions of protection; — overflowing with the loyalty — the chivalry — indispensable to form a rampart round the *throne*, lest the throne be *over-thrown*. — But if there wanted in my bosom any proof of the “divinity that doth hedge” a sovereign, it was afforded in the mysterious influence which, by a simple form of heraldic proclamation, had converted a timid child into a thinking, feeling, woman. — Yet even that word is insufficient; the fulness of the change is only demonstrable by the expression — “into *QUEEN*!”

Never shall I forget the influence exercised over my feelings by the first expansion of the pure virgin voice, — when from the throne the new Sovereign addressed herself to the peers of her realm. — No theatrical appeal to their devotion. — All was calm, — dignified, — and right royal. — She came to summon around her the descendants of the sage counsellors of her fathers; not to avail herself of the temporary enthusiasm of the hour — “a *QUEEN* — ay, every inch a queen!”

And yet that voice was so useful, — that form so slight, — that countenance so mild, — that one could not but be deeply affected by the prospects of the dangers surrounding every woman, though a queen, — every sovereign albeit a woman! — A double danger was impending over that fair frail being; and I could have found it in my heart to turn aside and weep, as grey-headed men are known to have done at her first council, as I listened to the opening words of her address! — Ere it came to a close, I was re-assured. An unaccountable feeling of trust arose in my bosom. — I speak it not profanely, when I say that the idea of the yet unknown Saviour, a child among the Doctors of the Temple, occurred spontaneously to my mind.

Everybody in London, as I have already observed, was

in the highest spirits. — But though disposed to attribute the exhilaration of public feeling to the auspicious dawning of a new reign, I was not blind to the fact that a *very* considerable circle of London society opened its arms to receive the new Lord Ormington, with an affection secondary only to the feeling evinced towards its new sovereign.

I understand your smile, malicious Public! — You are thinking of La Fontaine's *âne portant les reliques*! — You are thinking of the Italian poet who, seated moralizing under a shrine by the road side, fancied it was *himself* the peasant saluted as they passed. — But I tell you it *was* Lord Ormington to whom all White's exclaimed — "My dear fellow — I am deuced glad to see you. How are you?" — It *could* not be the queen!

It is a pleasant thing to take a new lease of one's life, and on the old premises. — I was afraid I might feel myself Boodle-ish on my arrival in town. — But no! — Conscious that

Un' grand alma e teatro a se stesso,

I knew that whether at White's or the Alfred, the Carlton or the Reform Club, I carried with me certain elements of distinction which must prevent my becoming confounded with those whom poor Lord Ormington had designated as the enemies of the country, or those whom I felt to be fitter associates for Cecil, a *roué*, than Cecil, a peer.

It was a long time since I had spent a year out of London, — that is, a year out of London spent in the country; and confess I longed to kneel down and kiss the pavement of St. James's Street, singing like Tancredi,

O patria! dolce, — (but not ingrata) patria!  
Io ti saluto.

The very cries had music in them as I went up the street. — The muffin-bell awoke poetical fancies; and by the waters of the Serpentine I could have sat down and wept. LONDON! — ineffable, — adorable, — incompara-



ble, good-for-nothing, good-for-every-thing, good-for-nobody, good-for-every-body London! — like the lover's love-liest,

There is no living with thee, or without thee!

But for thy exquisite social system of bachelor beatitude, Club-life, the lungs exposed to thy sulphureous and lurid atmosphere might be tempted to gasp, "something too much of this"! — But I recommend any man worth calling himself a man, accustomed to luxurious mornings of chat and nights of whist, with the best sayers of good things and players of a good game extant, to say nothing of capital dinners and suppers by way of *eutr'acte*, to try twelve months at Ormington Hall, with such neighbours as Jonas Birchington, D.D. and Sir Gerald Moseley, Bart. — I began to see that Ormington was Boodles in its worst way, — Boodle's out-Boodled — the *caput mortuum* of Boodle's — the ext. of morphine of the Boodle-dose; — or, in other words, it was country life in all its stupendous — But I forget myself! — I shall be obliged like my Lord Duberly to hire a gentleman to mend my aristocratic cakelology, if I go on at this coxcombical rate.

Town was very full; — a spontaneous burst of brilliancy like a spring in the American woodlands! — Hope, — hope, — hope, — everywhere hope! — But for such stirring epochs in the life of kingdoms, as now and then the dappled dawn of a new reign, the drowsy hum of parliamentary debating would put them *too* fast asleep!

If one could choose the fortunes of an empire, as people did those of their children in those better days of earth when fairies were godmothers instead of rich uncles and aunts who leave one nothing, methinks one could devise no better dowry for one's pet Realm, than to have a woman of eighteen for its Sovereign. — I care not a straw for old reliances on the firmness of masculine will, or the strength of masculine understanding: — in the rulers of the People, give us firstwise tenderness of heart! — Grey-headed statesmen may be had for asking for, — or if not asking, *paying* for. — A privy council is a thing as easy to bring together as the company of a minor theatre. But as toucheth Him or Her who by divine grace sitteth upon

the Throne, unless by the will of God good and gracious, who or what is to stand our friend!

Purity of intention, warmth of feeling, that instinctive goodwill towards mankind arising from the certainty of being the object of universal goodwill, is a better security for good government than the craft of the crafty or the caution of the wise. — We can judge for ourselves. — Let those who, like myself, have survived the moiety of a century, compare themselves at fifty with their Selves of half that age, and proclaim which is the worthier of trust! — It is only wine, medals, and Windsor soap that improve with years.

Queen Victoria may become a great potentate. — As in the reign of Numa, the gates of the temple of Janus may be shut during forty years under her government, which I take to be the greatest of legislative triumphs. She may be called great, — like “Anna, whom three realms obeyed;” — or illustrious, like Elizabeth, so omnipotent over the heads and hearts of her faithful humble servants. — She may become great as a queen, and good as a wife and mother. But I doubt whether at any moment of her greatness or goodness, she will be dearer or holier in the sight of men and angels, than on that auspicious 21st of June, when she arose a child and lay down a queen, to return to which virginity of sovereignty were

As though a rose could shut and be a bud again!

One only sovereign of our line matches in the memory of history with that angelic purity; young Edward, the saintly child, for whom the tears of reformed England pleaded vainly with the will of Heaven.

But I seem to take my Public for poor Birchington, on whom I felt privileged to inflict my prose in return for the enormous proportion I endured at his hands. — I dare say it cares very little what I thought about the queen. I dare say it would rather be listening to inedited anecdotes of myself. — It has taken for granted, I trust, that my first act on acceding to the throne of Ormington Hall, had been to double the income of my niece, — I might perhaps have done more, but that, as I was *then* contemplating my pro-

posals for the hand of Lady Phœbe Locksley, it appeared injudicious to incumber my rent-roll beyond reasonable limits; — more especially as it was impossible to guess what amount of little Jane and Cecil Danbys might be the result of the projected alliance. — Dreading for Walsingham the consequences of a life of idleness, I now ventured, when honoured by demonstrations of ministerial patronage at the moment of the formation of Her Majesty's household, to hint that, any-favours purposed towards myself being clearly intended as a token of gratitude for the parliamentary services of my late brother, they would be more advantageously bestowed upon his daughter or her husband. — I have little doubt that the office held by Walsingham from that day till a few weeks ago, has been one of the chief sources of the domestic happiness, which, Heaven be thanked, continues to sanctify the *lares* and *penates* of Connaught Place.

It has not, I trust, taken for granted that Act II. of Cecil I. at Ormington Hall, was to set down the dear Robert of poor little Mary, for the reversion of Birchington's living; or that in the event of the reverend Doctor's getting the archdeaconry, for which he was perpetually bothering me to bother government, that happy couple were to succeed to the office of sharing my family haunch and domestic prosifications. "Not guilty," dear Public, "upon my honour!" I had too much respect for myself, too much regard for the life of piety and plain-work to which the little woman had resigned herself, to do aught to disturb the even tenor of her days. There is a living of £900 per annum, on my estates in Suffolk, (three hundred miles as the crow flies from Ormington Hall,) to which, — the incumbent being eighty-nine years old, a great age even for the incumbent of a capital living, — I have at present every intention of transplanting my pale white rose; who has now, however, undergone the transmutation apparent on the mulberry tree after the tragical end of Pyramus and Thisbe under its branches, and become a full-blown damask!

A period having arrived when there breathed not the woman in Great Britain, (with a single exception,) whom I was not by wealth and title justified in demanding as a wife, I could not sufficiently bless the farsightedness which

had deterred me from elevating this worthy little body to a position she was so scantily qualified to adorn:—the gods had taken care of Catō!

By some strange faculty of perverseness, now that I had survived my detrimentalism, and was besieged on all sides by fathers, mothers, guardians, widows, maidens, young and old, high and low, rich and poor, — I recoiled from the very idea of the twice-one-are-two materialism of wedded life! — It is a rash sacrifice to clip one's own wings or be the Dalilah of one's Sampsonian strength. — I confess I was beginning to wonder how any man of woman born, found courage for becoming her spouse.

That autumn, I was favoured with invitations to battues, archery meetings, and holiday-parties, to the amount of four Castles, nine Parks, seven Halls, one Court, three Places, thirteen Lodges, six Houses, and thirty-nine Cottages, — making in all eighty-two; — or on an average of two daughters and half a niece per house, I was wanted to marry five hundred and seventy four young ladies, without including extras. — The one eel to be selected out of a bag of five hundred and seventy-four serpents, was really too slippery a consideration! — I preferred leaving the peerage, for the present, destitute of a Lady Ormington; and causing the Chaperon's Own book still to record the qualifications of the owner of Ormington Hall as "forty years of age, (or thereabouts,) single, handsome, clever, and of popularity rivalled only by his un-catchability." — I was not to be had at any price.

By the way, could I, without expressly despatching a courier or ambassador extraordinary to the heirs of a certain noble Sicilian and Cecil-ian family, not a hundred miles from Palermo, have secured possession of a miniature painted by Stroehling in the year 1810, in the height of my Emily Barnet enthusiasm, I should not have been sorry. Every one knows the manner in which Mademoiselle Clairon preserved, even in old age, the illusions of her stage beauty. — A portrait painted of her in the supreme moment of her charms, was constantly placed upon her toilet table, side by side with her looking glass: and glancing from one to the other, it was easy to apply pink, white, black, and blue, to the withered face of forty,

fifty, and even sixty, so as to maintain its aspect of twenty-one.

I have no reason to suppose I should have been more acceptable to any one of the five hundred and seventy four young ladies with my hair a shade darker, or a tinge of brighter bloom perceptible upon my cheek; nor was it necessary to put my contemporaries of the bay-window to the blush, by bringing back the light of other days to it, in the shape of the CECIL of the Regency. Still, for my recreation sake,—in order to remind me “that such things were, that were most dear,”—I should not have been sorry for the power of contemplating now and then a face which in England, Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, had been so often pronounced arch-angelic.

I will not swear, by the way, that the impending interests of the coronation may not have had some trifling influence over the five hundred and seventy four candidates for my coronet and family diamonds.—To figure as Lady Ormington, (CECIL’s Lady Ormington!) at the crowning of Victoria I.—was a destiny that Cleopatra, or Sarah Duchess of Marlborough might have envied.—All Peers rise considerably in the market, on the eve of a Coronation; and I am not sure but that Lord Harris might have done better than Tchindagore Park, had he prolonged his heiress-hunt. Never shall I forget the glance cast upon me by Lord Ashby, when, a few days preparatory to that unequalled display of national magnificence, he saw me examining at Houlditch’s the new chariot I was to launch on the occasion,—well knowing that Lord and Lady Arthur Cornwallis (whom he had never seen since their marriage) were glad to skulk about in a job!

The Mereworths, meanwhile, had peremptorily effected the return of their son, whose prolonged absence from England was an injury to his prospects in public life.—He should have been already in parliament, and would probably have been honoured with some household appointment, but for his obstinate preference for Italy. The taste for olives had superseded all other tastes. He had not only forgotten Jane,—but his own people and his father’s house.

Instead of the open-faced boy who figured at the last

Coronation, there was now something scornful, something almost Byronic, in his dark dishevelled manly beauty. But I could see that he was wonderfully proud of himself. When he came to visit me, he Italianized so Italianesquely, as to bring vividly before me the chestnut copses of the villa L\* \*i, — its ilex wood and grove of cedar, — its sparkling fountains and pale statues, — its twisted stemmed pomegranates, its willow-hued olive gardens, and deep deep blue landscape in the distance: And ever and anon, he kept stealing a glance at me, to see how I bore it; whether I had patience with him, or was handling a stiletto, under my dressing gown! Poor fellow! — he fancied himself a traitor to his friend, and Cecil a dupe! When he talked, with tears in his eyes, of the blessings from which he had been torn by the tyranny of his family, the *peculiar* distinctions he had enjoyed in Italy, and his anticipations of the time when he should return thither to pass the happy remnant of his days, I almost longed to tell him that not a single young lord of the slightest personal merit ever went the grand tour, without having sworn eternal constancy to a Milanese Princess — brought back some withered orange flowers in his dressing-box, — reminiscences of ilex woods and thickets of cedars, — and a most Orlando-like determination to return and enjoy “the blessed remnant of his days,” on the banks of the Arno, with one fair spirit for his minister, to lay his bones at last among the cypress trees; — all which, he was wise enough to put in his pipe and smoke, before the close of the season! However, there was no good in disenchanting poor-Chipp! It requires the barbarity of Herod the infanticide, to exterminate the illusions of a youthful heart, just tottering in its innocent go-cart!

I forgave him, poor lad! — and so did his father and mother, when they saw the universal admiration excited by his noble and picturesque beauty at the coronation so far bewilder his vanity, that there were fourteen ounces weight the less of Italian correspondence that week in his postage account. Chipp was voted *nem. con.* the handsomest man in town; and was already deeply involved in the whirl of London dissipation. All Lord and Lady

Mereworth had further to desire, was that he should cut his wisdom teeth, and appear with half as much distinction on the stage of public life, as marked his debut on the boards of the bored of fashion.

It was just then a spring tide in London. Princes and Dukes seemed to rain down upon the new reign; and the press of foreign chivalry was as for a *carrousel* or tournament. I flatter myself I did not cut a *very* sorry figure at the coronation; where I honoured the procession with a considerable portion of "the *invaluable* casket of Ormington jewels, valued at £60,000," disposed upon my dress. Some people thought I had overdone it. A few were ill-natured enough to observe that I had eclipsed myself. But betwixt ourselves, good reader, I should have been glad enough to have exchanged the radiant Lord Ormington of 1838, for the simple Cecil who had philosophized on the tomb of Buckingham in 1831; — and far more so, for the happy, triumphant Cecil, who, at the coronation of George IV. had been wandering among the myrtle hedges of Italy with Byron, — my soul bright with the brightness of its glory, and his own.

It is something, however, after living through four reigns to be able to look back upon such a youth as mine, illustrated by such a friend!

Illam mæa si partem animæ toto  
Maturior vis, quid moror altera  
Nec carus æque, nec superstes  
Integer. Ille dies utramque  
Duxit ruinam.

But it were of evil omen to close with words so dolorous the chapter treating of the accession of our young Elizabeth.

"Dicite Io Pæan," therefore —

**"et Io bis dicite Pæan!"**

## CHAPTER XIX.

Six years had pass'd and forty ere the six,  
 When Time began to play his usual tricks.  
 The locks once comely in a virgin's sight,  
 Locks of pure brown, display'd th' encroaching white.  
 The blood once fervid now to cool began,  
 And Time's strong pressure to subdue the man.  
 I rode or walk'd as I was wont before,  
 But now, the bounding spirit was no more;  
 A moderate pace would now my body heat  
 A walk of moderate length distress my feet.  
 I show'd my stranger guest my hills sublime,  
 But said, "the view is poor, we need not climb."  
 I ceas'd to hunt, — my horses pleas'd me less,  
 My dinner more; I learn'd to play at chess.  
 I took my dog and gun, but saw the brute  
 Was disappointed that I did not shoot.  
 My morning walks I now could bear to lose,  
 And bless'd the show'r that gave me not to choose.  
 In fact, I felt a languor stealing on;  
 The active arm, the agile hand, were gone.  
 I lov'd my cards, in order to dispose —  
 Told the same story oft — in short, began to prose!

THE above lines, "on which I stumbled the other day in the course of my morning's reading," as the M.Ps. say, when they want to introduce a quotation, — caused my ears to tingle. — But *do* I repeat myself, oh! Public of my soul? — *Am* I growing an old bore? — *Can* you accuse me of holding you by the button? — If so, hang me on the spot! — for I swear I would sooner be a knife-grinder's dog, and bay the gas-lamps, than have reason to believe that the respectful lane made for me as I enter the lobby, or the Clubs, or even the crush-room at the Opera, arises from the apprehensions which act as a Lord Chamberlain to clear the way for those most eminent bores of modern times — ("*name, name, name!*" from the opposition benches). Thank you, my Public! — all things considered, I had rather not!

It would cut me to the soul were I to learn that you had said — (*not* per favour of the Reviews — which like



those of Hyde Park, — are “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,” but through those whispers of the coteries which signify very much, albeit as softly sibilant as the rustling of a barley-field in the breeze,) — that my memoirs resemble the mechanical music of a snuff-box, — at first brilliant and animated, but waxing slower and slower towards the close, till, after dragging its slow length along, it ends in utter tediousness at last.

One of the cleverest of writers has informed us that to write a book is a craft requiring as long an apprenticeship as to construct a clock or manœuvre a campaign. It is true, the Prince de Condé got into a post-chaise on leaving school, drove to the theatre of war, and won a battle that made him immortal, — as the first part of my memoirs my Self. — *Cependant, il faut plus que de l'esprit pour être auteur, et il me semble que je dis les choses bien plus finement que je ne les écris.* It is not my fault, good Public, if you choose to read instead of listen. Moreover, if you *do* find me a *leetle* slow, have the goodness to remember that I am now in the Upper House.

Not, however, that *I* perceive any difference between Lord Ormington and CECIL. One or two impertinent fellows pretend that after alighting from my cab at White's, I am sure to fix upon some fellow's arm, on pretence of having news to relate, but in reality to take breath and find support. — Libel! — “a thing devised by the enemy!”

Why *should* I be a-weary of either the world or my Self? — I have a mighty easy time of it.

Why scandalize the world? — the world to me  
Is good and gracious as a world can be!

In my accession to rank and fortune, *I* have not had to undergo the *peine forte et dure* of a new Peer, obliged to fuss and pompose, in order to prove himself “to the manner born;” — nor am *I* compelled, like Mr. Holford, to buy all the Hobbimas in the market, or undergo the persecution of knee-worship, as the Baal of the hour. I have too many Hobbimas in my gallery at Ormington, and used to see too many undoubted originals of the Flemish school

painted in Soho for George IV., ever to fall a victim to virtù. — My position in the world was ready made. As 12th Lord Ormington, no less than as Cecil I., I am happily privileged to enjoy my twenty-four hours in peaceful egotism.

I must admit that, during my two first years of dignity, I *did* harness myself somewhat superfluously to the yoke of public life. Rocked in the soft illusion that I had duties to perform in the House of Lords, — I was as faithful to my post as the Black Rod. But I soon found there was nothing to be done there, but yawn. — I had missed my vocation. Nature, I have reason to think, intended me to fill the vacuum she is said to abhor, created by the untimely end of my brother. There can be little doubt that I was destined to become one of the most remarkable parliamentary leaders of modern times; but a leader in the Upper House is like the leader of a newspaper, — a mere *résumé* of things that are better said elsewhere. There is no reason, however, that because I have missed my cue, I should break into a subordinate part unsuitable to my capacities.

I will not pretend to deny there have been moments when I have looked forward to the retirement or death of Melbourne, as likely to create an opening I might turn to account. — It has always been thought that the peculiar charm of the Viscount in the eyes of those whom to charm is glory, consisted in the contrast between his careless manners and mental accomplishments, — the perfect nature of his tone, the consummate art of his policy, — and his mode of doing business as though it acted on an impulse of its own. Now, I have ever noticed that, in matters of favouritism, the cloudy day ought to succeed the day of sunshine, the joyous sunshine, the day over-clouded; — and conceive that no two people on the surface of this world of incongruities, ever stood so dissimilar in their shoes as Melbourne and myself. Not that I mean to say anything unhandsome of him. Bocket is one who flings off vulgar censure "like dew-drops from a lion's mane;" — and I suppose no man ever went out of office, in any days of any of the successive empires of civilization, so free from the blot of interestedness, or purposes ignoble.

— In that, again, I conceive myself to be somewhat his superior.

To my view of the question, a Prime Minister, next to the interests of the country, is bound to consider his own. It is absurd to talk of loving our country for its own sake. We love our country because it is the country that gave birth to our Self; — and may as well pretend to prize a pedestal more than the statue it supports, or a nut-shell than the kernel, as to care for the united nothingness of the Red Book, more than the one individual of whose virtues and abilities we have such intimate cognizance. I only trust I may have occasion to demonstrate the wisdom of my theory!

The Tories are as sure to fall out and fall *in*, as the Brunswick Theatre, and from the same cause, — the crushing weight of the roof overpowering the weakness of the walls; — and when at length extinguished by the preponderance of Peel, and the premiership comes anew into the market, or rather into my hands, I will take care not to make *my* bow to office, save in the capacity of Earl of Ormington.

Not that it much signifies. — My heir presumptive is a nineteenth cousin, who lives in Devonshire Place, and employs a country tailor; — and to own the truth, I have almost abjured the idea of matrimony. To double my pains and pleasures would be too great a derangement of my habits, unless on certain temptations which I do not find offered. *Je cherche en vain ma défaite*. — I could hardly expect anything so young and fair as I feel due to myself, to defer to my peculiarities; — to devote so many weeks of the year to yatching, so many to public life at Ormington Hall, for the entertainment of the country, — and so many to private life in London, for the entertainment of my Self. I dare say I might readily raise a regiment of Lady Ormingtons, among the Frederica Grays and Lady Harriet Vandeleurs, — the red-nosed, the halt, and the blind. But *my* aspirations are after the sublime and beautiful, — after that animated Muse, the marble-browed Louisa, — after the dark-haired Lady Anne, one of Lely's beauties escaped from her frame, — or the bright Selina, delicate as an apple-blossom, and buoyant as the

goddess of youth ; — and these, I know, would not hesitate to inscribe the name of Ormington in the Black List of their rejected, as unceremoniously as though there were not merged in its ennobled obscurity, the once triumphant dissyllable of CECIL !

But Heaven be thanked I am not devoid of consolations. I possess an excellent cook, an excellent account at my banker's, an excellent breed of deer, an excellent cellar of wine, four cardinal virtues which secure me a staunch body-guard of friends. — I have my favourite corner at Crockey's. — White's would think less of itself on the day my cab had not been seen in waiting at its own door. I am not him of whom it was so pithily written

Late and alone he dines at Brookes's,  
Tries what a newspaper or book says  
Till half past ten, and then, poor man,  
Gets through his evening, as he can !

*My evenings are bright as the noondays of other men !*

For sunny weather, when London breathes asthmatically, I have my *bel-respiro* at Campden Hill, looking to the ever-classical shades of Holland House, and having in its shrubbery the only verification I ever saw of the aquaticum of Pliny's Tuscan villa ; — a liquid table standing in an alcove of Carrara marble surrounded with Oriental planes. At my canicular banquets, where everything, even the footmen and the conversation-men are iced, we dine round a basin of highly polished white marble, into which spring-water as pure as crystal is so artfully forced, that like the style of CECIL and Sir John Denham, it is "without o'erflowing full." — On the margin of the font, are placed the more serious dishes, — the *poularde à l'aspic d'estragon*, the *mayonnaise d'écrevisses* ; while the *hors d'œuvres* float about the gelid board in vessels shaped like caïques, gondolas, or waterfowl, and the condiments are contained in water-lilies of frosted silver.

For the autumn, I have my yacht, the *Frañszetta*, which won the cup last season, "as nobody can deny ;" — I have Newmarket, — where my cottage with a double coach-house and four-and-twenty stall stable, is one of the pet-follies of its paradise of fools, — (I beg pardon, I meant

*foals*;) and last, but Heaven and the tax-gatherers know, not least, I have my family vault, in Lancashire, — my Ormington Hall, — whose preserves are the second-best in England, (*every* country-baronet's being the *very* best) and whose kennel has been immortalized by Nimrod.

But although I feel it a duty to the memory of Lord Ormington, or rather of the Lords Ormington, to pass a portion of the year in this their manorial den, I will not swear that I never wished it burnt down, to preserve me from a recurrence of the duty. — We all know the verse of Chamisso: — “Blessed be thou, oh! Hall of my ancestors, — over whose foundations the ploughshare now extends its furrows; — and thrice blessed be thou, oh! whoever first guided the plough over the foundations of the Hall of my ancestors!”

Nevertheless, I sometimes feel, that even in the midst of enjoyments worthy of a Satrap,

A craving void is aching in my breast.

I know no more what I want than Alcibiades or Alexander the Great! — Perhaps my Public can inform me? — “*Les hommes commencent par l'amour, finissent par l'ambition, et ne se trouvent dans une assiette plus tranquille que lorsqu'ils meurent.*” I cannot therefore be near my end yet: for so far from being in “*une assiette tranquille,*” I am as restless as an armadillo!

Among other indications of my restlessness, two years ago I made a pleasant cruise in the Mediterranean; on pretence of a visit to Alvanley, but in reality to witness the domestic happiness of the La Bélinayes, who are settled in the little Carlist colony at Odessa; where Clémentine devotes her life in the most exemplary manner to the education of her three sons, — all that portion of her life *bien entendu* not absorbed by reminiscences of Paris and the olden time.

But London is what is called my home. It is there alone I experience the sensation people called patriotism. Though born in the Château de Boulainvilliers, a circumstance which some accept in apology for my papilionaceous propensities, London is my country!

It is needless to say that the old mansion in Hanover Square, inherited by Herries with the other personalities of poor Lord Ormington, has never taken the length of my august foot since my brother-in-law came into possession, much to my relief, — for I would neither have lived there, nor brought it to the hammer to be George Robins-ed into flagrancy; and as to shutting it up as a ghost-stud, I have already expressed, à propos to Chippenham, my abhorrence of eccentricities. — I settled myself therefore at once in a new ORMINGTON HOUSE, which I flatter myself stands pretty high in the list of the memorabilities of social life.

ORMINGTON HOUSE is, — like that of Northumberland, but without intending a pun, — a thing *per se*. My continental experiences having served to open my eyes, while English opulence enables me to open my purse, — my establishment is one that George IV. would have pronounced unobjectionable; and my Wednesday and Saturday dinners, and Thursday evenings, have been rarely excelled, I suspect, out of the Faubourg St. Honoré. — Every Eminence in the kingdom, except Cardinal Puff, is successively my guest. — Exempt from prejudice of caste, guiltless of Mæcenas-ian vulgarity, I am as well satisfied to collect around me such people as Devereux, Clarensfield, and Chippenham, the Mereworths, or the Ilfracombs, as the intrinsically great men of the day, the Colberts, Louvois, Molières, Boileaus, Racines, La Fontaines, or Perraults, of *my* Louis Quatorzian saloon, — the stars of my galaxy!

In my little parliament, Bulwer represents the republic of letters, — Landseer, the province of the arts; — Moore dines with me as the poet, — Lockhart, as the critic, — Louis de Noailles, as the Grammont, — Sydney Smith, as the wit, — Sidney Herbert, as the Sir *Philip* Sidney of the day. — Every god and demigod has his specific shrine in my temple. — I invite Lovelace Milnes (as Lord Ormington, *I* may allow myself finery enough

When a man's name is Dick, to call him Lovelace,

more particularly as "the Brook side" is nearly equal to

Althea, and he has an objection to having it all Dicky with him ! — I invite Milnes, I say, as “ young England,” Greville as “ old England,” and Sir Henry, my Watier’s chum, as “ old Harry !” — I invite the roué set (just now, by the grace of ministerial anathema, so much the fashion,) whenever I want to pass for a moral man ; or when I wish to re-assume my Don Juanic hat and plume, surround myself with the country Baronet husband and sons-in-law of Lady Winstanley, by comparison with whose humdrummery, the innocent fleece of my lambkinism passes for that of a lost mutton ! — I give dinners to some men, because they understand them, — to some, because they want them, — to some, because *I* want *them*. — I do not pretend to any super-exquisiteness of gastronomy, because givers of super-exquisite dinners are apt to be fussy about them, to put their entrées into italics so as not to be lightly passed over, and above all, to be punctilious of punctuality. — A dinner should be good enough to be talked of afterwards, but not so good as to prevent one’s talking about other things while the banquet is proceeding. — I call the courses *evil* courses that demand perpetual notes of admiration.

My table comprehends all sorts of talking and talkers ; — “ original matter, criticism, gossip of the week, and notices of the fine arts,” as the weekly papers have it. — But people do for CECIL what they would not do elsewhere : — Rogers smiles for me, — Howden frowns, — Lupe looks solemn. — My reviewers gossip, — my Chancellors of the Exchequer prattle small talk, — my men about town listen while Ossulston, Courtenay, or Dundas is singing, — Luttrell or Macaulay talking. —

Οι δε πανηγυριοι μολπή Θεον ιλασκούτο,  
Καλοὶ αἰδούντες Παινοῦα κούροι Ἀχαιῶν.  
Μελπονίας Ἐκαστρον ο δε φρενα τερπετ' ἀκούω.

I *rather* flatter myself that when Ormington House shall exhibit over its portico the achievement of the 13th Lord of that name, London will testify its respect and sorrow in crape and bombazine.

Among the few youthful follies I have survived, is the chimerical and romantic love of solitude. I am quite of St. Paul’s opinion concerning the mischiefs of a lonely life ; — and shall take leave to do into English a few lines

of the Byron of France upon that subject, which seem to understand my meaning better than I understand it myself.

“Man was not made for companionship with trees and stones, with azure skies and purple seas, with flowers or mountains, — but with his fellow-men. In the stormier days of youth, we fancy solitude a refuge from the attacks of the world, a balm for the wounds received in its struggles; but experience teaches us that in a spot remote from the sympathy and good-will of our fellow creatures, no degree of poetical enjoyment or intellectual imagining is capable of filling the hollow abyss of the soul. I once longed for the life of the desert; and most honest enthusiasts will confess to the same early illusion. — But trust me, my brethren, Nature has created our hearts of too kindly a texture to intend us to dispense with each other’s society. — Mutual support is our best policy and surest happiness. Like children of the same household, who fight and scratch yet inevitably make up their quarrels and play together, — our pains and pleasures are fated to be in common. *We cannot fling off the tie!*”

By the way, I suppose it is because poor old Lady Harriet Vandeleur finds it difficult to draw around her the society indispensable to human happiness, that she takes refuge in Associations: always getting up some joint Stock Company or other, for the purpose of redressing wrongs, or setting the world to rights. — The last Prospectus sent to me in her ladyship’s name, with four and twenty Queen’s Heads, all of a row upon the cover, was “A Proposal for the formation of an Anti-works-of-Fiction Society; for the promotion of Matter of Fact;” offering premiums to non-novel-readers, and bonuses to total-abstainers from romance; the perusal of a Magazine to be finable, and of a poem, expulsion from the society. — The Prospectus did not particularize the historical books that were to be included under the head of works of fiction; but it strikes me that such a project opens the door to singular condemnations.

For the name of CECIL or even Ormington to appear in the list of such an Association, were to publish an epigram upon myself.



For there is a vast deal of romance in me yet. I am only what the Aberdeen metaphysicians would call a hypothetical realism. — I *appear* to eat well, — drink well, — sleep well. —

Et dependent il est d'horribles agonies  
Qu'on ne saura jamais, — des douleurs infinies,  
Que l'on n'aperçoit pas.  
Il est plus d'une croix au Calvaire de l'ame,  
Sans l'auréole d'or et sans la blanche femme  
Echevelée au bas !

Toute ame est un sépulcre où gisent mille choses,  
Des cadavres hideux dans des figures roses  
Dorment ensevelis ;  
On retrouve toujours les larmes sous le rire ;  
Les morts sont les vivans, et l'homme est à vrai dire  
Une nécropolis. —

Les tombeaux déterrés des vieilles cités mortes  
Les chambres et les puits de la Thèbe aux cent portes,  
Ne sont pas si peuplés !  
On n'y recontre pas de plus affreux squelettes  
Un plus vaste fouillis d'ossements et de têtes  
Aux ruines mêlés. —

L'on en voit qui n'ont pas d'épithaphe à leurs tombes,  
Et de leurs trépassés font comme aux catacombes  
Un grand entassement ;  
Dont le cœur est un champ sans croix ni pierres,  
Et que l'aveugle Mort, de diverses poussières,  
Remplit confusément. —

D'autres, moins oublieux, out des caves funébres  
Où sont rangés leurs morts comme celles des Guébres  
Ou des Egyptiens ;  
Tout autour de leur cœur sont debout les momies,  
Et l'on y reconnait les figures blémies  
De leurs amours anciens.

Dans un pur souvenir, chastement embaumée,  
Ils gardent au fond d'eux l'ame qu'ils ont aimée  
Triste et charmant trésor ;  
La mort habite en eux au milieu de la vie  
Ils s'en vont poursuivant la chère ombre ravie  
Qui leur sourit encore !

My Public must pardon my endeavouring to depict the state of my heart and soul, in any other tongue than the

Queen's English. — It pretended to understand and admire French tragedy acted by Mademoiselle Rachel, because she was the fashion; let it admire and understand French poetry, quoted by CECIL, — for the same reason.

At all events, be it understood, — no matter through what language or exposition, — that, in spite of the familiarity with which it contemplates me driving up St. James's Street in my Brougham, on the damp days when twinges of the gout remind me as accurately of my age as Burke's peerage, — they behold in me, as it were, A HAUNTED MAN! — My brain has galleries, my heart chambers, as full of spectres as those of the Castle of Otranto!

Some of these "*cheres ombres ravies*" I have portrayed in prose, I flatter myself not very inferior to the verse of Byron in depicting his Francesca who

Was so slight and transparent of hue,  
You might have seen the moon shine through!

Emily, — Helena, — Franszetta, — the idols of my boyhood, — Nunziata, Theresa, Mary, Clémentine, the deluders of my middle age, — have been successively called up before you. — But I alluded, if you remember, in my last volume, to a certain Viscountess of whom I promised you "more hereafter;" and in my first, ventured to shadow forth a fatal remembrance of the follies of my F. O. days, which I would fain have consigned to oblivion.

It would be doing you injustice were I to defraud you of a brief relation of these two piquant adventures; and if I have time, a chapter or two shall be added to this present volume, to describe two of the most painful apparitions which ghostlify the chambers of my brain.

I am almost ashamed, at the years of which the Peerage accuses me, to plead guilty to such fickleness of nature. But be it remembered, that even that best of men, Wilberforce, had an especial clause in his prayers, on entering into the holy estate of matrimony, against his "volatility of nature!" — and if William Wilberforce confessed to being volatile, what chance for CECIL? — If these things were done in a green tree, — eh?

I have also a budget of politics to inflict upon you. — I

have hardly patience to wait for the meeting of Parliament, in order to give tongue to the ULTRA-CONSERVATISM, which is to form the basis of the CECIL-ian administration.—You shall hear what you shall hear of “that glorious English aristocracy, which has braved a thousand years the rabble and its sprees,—a body more essentially conservative, my lords, than the ancient Germanic Empire, or modern Germanic Confederation, — than all that Scandinavia, — all that —”

But alas ! dear Public,—there is scarcely room in the final sheet of Vol. II., or time on this 21st day of October, for more than a slight hint of *my* manifesto to Tamworth.

It is late—I have been interrupted by the visit of a Cecil II. — I have three letters to run through by post time, — and lo ! the bell. — You shall hear from me another time. — *Agréez l'assurance de mes sentimens distingués* ; and believe me, ever dear and attached Public,

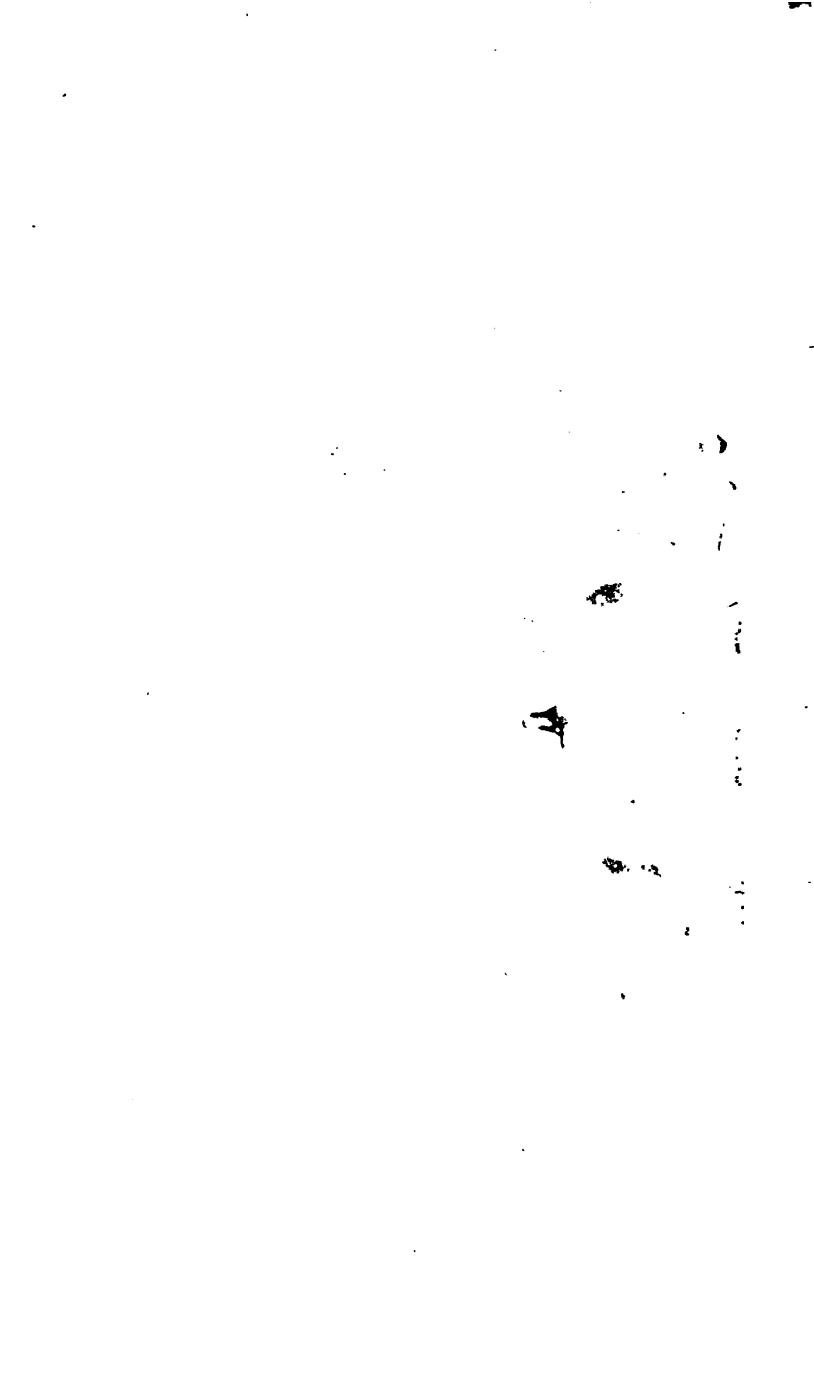
With unfeigned respect (!)

Your faithful, humble servant,

ORMINGTON.

FINIS.

at.  
ch  
ou  
st  
le  
v  
r  
[illegible]  
e  
r,  
[illegible]  
-  
[illegible]  
d



A FINE IS INCURRED IF THIS BOOK IS  
NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON  
OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED  
BELOW.

422793

SEP

'74 H

OCT 4 1974

BOOK DUE - WID

CANCELLED

SEP 15 1977

SEP 28 1977

AUG 15 1977 H

AUG 15 1977

5799539

